



The
Church
in Politics



THE CHURCH IN POLITICS

BY
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To
DANIEL A.
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The Church in Politics

Chapter One

The Church *Is* in Politics

FIFTY years ago General Grant remarked that "in the United States there are three great political parties: the Republican, the Democratic, and the Methodist Church". The General spoke before the days of the Anti-Saloon League, the Board of Prohibition, Temperance and Public Morals, Wayne Wheeler, Bishop James Cannon, Jr., and Dr. Clarence True Wilson. But he knew something about politics. And he knew that the churches were in it. Other politicians, before and since, have observed the same thing. Some of them have stated the results of their observations in unmistakable language, but with inappreciable effect. In fact, the heat of the current attacks proves, if nothing else, that the churches today are more effectively in politics than ever.

Now, it is not easy to define just what is meant by the church in politics or to indicate at what precise point in public utterance a minister of the gospel becomes a "political parson." A certain section of the press has plenty to say on the subject. What it

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says is revealing, but not altogether satisfactory. In fact, one gathers from the editorials and the *Congressional Record* that it is not the church in politics that is the issue at all. It is rather the church in politics on behalf of certain questions which these particular editors, Congressmen and lesser crusaders desire to settle in a fashion which the church in politics makes very difficult.

When the present uproar is followed, day by day, one begins to discriminate between noises and then to grow a little suspicious. For there is no concerted move to get the church out of politics. There are only unrelated drives to get it out of prohibition politics or disarmament politics or World Court politics. The American Legion and the Association Against the Prohibition Amendment seem to share the same convictions about the political activities of the churches. A great American principle—so they agree in telling us—is at stake. If that is the case and if they were in alliance, they might conceivably start quite a crusade on the subject. Other organizations that share so great a moral conviction find it to their advantage to go into action together. And the American people have always been susceptible to crusades, particularly when their own institutions were involved. But so far as I know, the Legion and the A. A. P. A. have formed no such entente. And sooner or later one is filled with the suspicion that

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they are stirred, primarily, not about the presence of the church in politics, but about certain other political issues—freer liquor or bigger navies let us say—on which the church in politics opposes them.

Furthermore, on this question of defining the church in politics one runs into some bewildering inconsistencies. The church is not always condemned for its political activities. Far from it. In certain situations it is commended.

Thus the New York World, as a newspaper opposed to prohibition, assaults in no uncertain language the political activities of the churches. But back in 1919 when the report of the Interchurch Commission on the twelve hour day in the steel industry was published, the World, as a paper with a liberal industrial policy, declared in an editorial that was headed "God or Gary", "the issue has been sharply drawn between Mammon and religion. Big business has challenged the church and unless the church is to retire discredited it must hold its ground. If it is to draw its inspiration from the Man of Galilee it can not capitulate to Elbert H. Gary".

On the same issue the Washington Post approvingly pointed out that: "These religious and ethical forces have got to be reckoned with by political parties and the employing groups of the country. They are fast coming to the mood of indifference whether their championship of social justice involves

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less of large donations to denominational treasuries or not.”¹

An even more striking exception to the present bitter hostility to the church in politics can be found in the record of ecclesiastical activities during 1917 and 1918. The church was expected to go into politics to help win the war. And it did. The clergy exchanged their vestments for military uniforms. They appeared in the most unexpected places—on theatre platforms, in cantonments, at gatherings of all sorts—sent by the government to stimulate our morale. And no one was alarmed. Pulpits rang with appeals for support for all manner of government measures and with condemnation for the nation’s foes. In fact, as I recall it, it was a preacher who set the record for the sale of Liberty Bonds. And no one cried out that this was a violation of the doctrine of the separation of church and state. The churches went into politics to help win the World War and were praised accordingly. But when they go into politics to help prevent another war they are roundly condemned. Preachers who were hailed as the welcome allies of politicians when we were fighting Germany are assailed as political parsons when they are fighting booze. With such an experience not altogether forgotten it is not strange that churchmen, whose political coöperation was welcomed in the one case, refuse to be intimidated in the other.

¹ *Literary Digest*, Sept. 4, 1929.

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The matter of the church in politics, in fact, is likely to resolve itself upon inspection into a question of whether you are having your back slapped or your toes stepped on.

Now it is probably safe to assume that there will be no disagreement with the statement that the individual churchman should go into politics. Regardless of how hopelessly dry he may be, there seems to be no effort under way to disfranchise him as an individual. On the contrary, it is generally assumed that an individual who is an irresponsible citizen is, by that fact, an unsatisfactory Christian. It is inherent in our democracy that every citizen shall participate in the affairs of government. It is inherent in Christianity to believe that the affairs of government can be ordered more perfectly and more in harmony with the will of God. In a democracy the opportunity is provided to give that belief some practical effect. Thus, if an individual fails as a citizen to participate in the processes of government, he, therefore, fails as a Christian to participate in one very significant way in the establishment of that ideal world order to which Christianity is committed. The individual churchman who shirks his civic duties neglects, thereby, one phase of his duty to God. To that conclusion there will probably be no serious objection.

But there is a second assumption which can be made with somewhat less assurance. If the indi-

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vidual's obligations as a Christian involve certain duties as a citizen, then it is the responsibility of the church, as the active agent of Christian principles, to teach that doctrine. This, I am aware, approaches dangerous ground. If the church undertakes to teach that the churchman shall exercise his civic duties, it is likely that it will endeavor to teach him to exercise them in a certain manner. But Americans, none-the-less, have accepted that risk. I have before me a volume entitled "Christian Citizenship" which has just been issued by one of the largest of American denominations. It is an official study book for the young people of that church, put out, as the foreword declares, as a result of "a conviction that instruction in citizenship is a proper part of the responsibility of the Church to which has been committed the development of the minds and activities of the youth". And that conviction, I believe, will be shared by Americans generally; just as its practice is apparent from the very beginning of American history.

"Religion in America", De Tocqueville observed,² "takes no direct part in the government of society, but it must be regarded as the first of their political institutions; for if it does not impart a taste for freedom, it facilitates the use of it". He noted the presence of many societies to send ministers of the

² *Democracy in America*, Vol. I, p. 393 (Macmillan).

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gospel into the West lest religion suffer decline in the frontier country and in consequence "the rising states be less fitted to enjoy free institutions". When he met these missionaries personally, he was amazed often to discover a politician where he had expected to find a priest. And he expresses it as his own conviction that "despotism may govern without faith, but liberty cannot. Religion is much more necessary in the republic . . . than in the monarchy; . . . it is more needed in democratic republics than in any others."

A similar conviction came to Lord Bryce when he stood in the midst of a great American city, watched the eager crowds, observed the sharp contrasts of poverty and of wealth, and realized how these hurrying men and women carried with them the conviction that this land, truly, was the work of their own hands to be used as they chose. "Suppose", he asked, "that all these men and women ceased to believe that there was any power above them, any future before them, anything in heaven or earth but what their senses told them? . . . Would the moral code stand unshaken, and with it the reverence for law, the sense of duty toward the community and even toward the generations yet to come? . . . History if she cannot give a complete answer to this question tells us that hitherto civilized society has rested on religion, and that free

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government has prospered best among religious people." ³

For these reasons the church in America has continued to teach good citizenship. It has been in the forefront of every movement for Americanization. Its clergy, from the very beginning, have provided oratorical features for Memorial Day and the Fourth of July. The Stars and Stripes are enshrined with the flag of the church in many of its pulpits. Bronze plaques in its vestibules give the Rolls of Honor of those who went from its membership at the call of the state in 1917 and 1918. Religion is not taught in our public schools. But it is significant that the multitudes of young people who go out from high school and college every year are sent, not only with the blessing of the civic authorities at the commencement exercises, but with the blessing of the church in the baccalaureate services.

And yet there has been no outcry against this mixing of the church in the business of the state. In fact, if the church declared its separation from the state at these points it would, I believe, be immediately attacked as disloyal. Thus if it is true that the good Christian is expected to be a good citizen, it is true, also, that organized Christianity is expected to teach that doctrine. And such teaching is not held to put the church in politics.

But, as I have already indicated, there is danger

* Bryce, *The American Commonwealth*, Vol. II, pp. 558, 559 (Macmillan).

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in such a concession. The church that instructs the churchman to exercise his civic duties will probably find it difficult to restrain the inclination to instruct him how to exercise them. It is at that point that trouble begins, for at that point, apparently, the church is held to go into politics. And that is the meaning of the expression which will be accepted in this book. The church has gone into politics whenever it has declared itself upon a specific political issue or has set forth its conviction as to how that issue should be settled, whether the issue itself involved the bearing of arms under the Roman Emperor or the enforcement of prohibition under the Eighteenth Amendment. This applies, of course, to the individual church through the counsel and exhortations of its minister, or the political petitions of the members of the congregation as well as to the political practices to which in the church they may pledge themselves. It applies also to denominations, in respect to the editorial declarations of church papers, the resolutions of unofficial gatherings of churchmen, the political activities of various boards and associations which the denominations support, as well as the more weighty political pronouncements of the official denominational assemblies.

The church, therefore, goes into politics to the extent to which it or the agencies to which it is officially related seek to make political opinion on

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specific issues or to shape the attitude of its members toward the policies of the government under which they live.

And, that, precisely, is what has happened. The state has assumed the obligation of the church to help to produce good citizens. That obligation has not been neglected. Similarly, the church has assumed from the state a recognition of its right to teach what Christian citizenship involves in general and, when moral issues were at stake, in particular. This assumption is now being bitterly attacked. But a recognition of the privilege that is assumed has never been withheld. As a result the church is in politics.

In fact, today General Grant's declaration about America's three great political parties needs amending. In the two generations since the Civil War the Methodists have been joined in politics, though with varying degrees of caution, by a goodly number of other evangelical American churches.

This does not mean that Methodist leaders have grown timid and Methodist fervor cooled. Far from it. I have attended many church gatherings of many denominations during the last ten years and I have followed the proceedings of many others. Political pronouncements are common to all of them. In fact, the most popular addresses, almost invariably, are those which consider matters that call for some sort of political action. And the response of Metho-

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dists to these appeals does not seem to me to be appreciably more enthusiastic than that of Presbyterians or Congregationalists or Baptists. The Methodists are attacked because their solidarity, their two-fisted methods and a certain lack of finesse make them conspicuous targets rather than because they, alone among American churchmen, have followed their pet reforms into politics.

Nor are these pet reforms, by any means, aimed exclusively at the control or prohibition of the liquor traffic. The Anti-Saloon League, "the church in action against the saloon," is continually under fire because of the efficiency of its political organization and the nature of the issue it represents rather than because the church has no other political plank in its platform and no other political facilities at its disposal.

No less than thirty-six denominations (including the Roman Catholic) have officially appointed peace commissions which, if they are not in the business of electing legislators, can certainly be counted upon, when peace issues are at stake, to seek to influence legislation. Fifty-seven interdenominational state and city church groups and ministerial associations have also appointed peace committees. Allied with these denominational agencies are certain interdenominational organizations. Most notable of these are the World Alliance for International Friendship through the Churches, and the Federal

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Council of the Churches of Christ in America. Through these channels the churches, on the question of world peace, are able to bring their common aims to an effective political focus.

The Federal Council, which is the officially created inter-church clearing house for twenty-seven denominations, has significantly represented Protestantism in more than one political battle. In the last decade the churches have gone on record through the Federal Council against the Japanese Exclusion Law, against military intervention in China, against the building program of the Big Navy Advocates. Through the same channel they have advocated American membership in the World Court, they have supported ratification of the Kellogg-Briand Treaty for the Outlawry of War, and, at the present time, they are actively supporting President Hoover's disarmament program.

Not all the churches of Protestantism, of course, accept the Federal Council. Certain denominations, fearful of its alleged "modernistic" tinge, or insistent that the business of the church should be confined to the proclamation of the "good old gospel" and the administration of the sacraments, have adhered to a "hands off" policy. Most important of the non-coöperating groups are the Southern Baptists and the Protestant Episcopalians, although the latter do coöperate in certain Council activities. In a few other denominations aggressive minorities

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have maintained a perennial but so far unsuccessful fight to withdraw from the organization. The Council, however, is very much like the League of Nations. Its activities have neither been free from error nor have they established an inter-church millennium. But in a wide range of church interests it has proved itself indispensable. If it were to be dissolved today, the increasing common interests of the churches would require the establishment of another similar organization tomorrow. And there is no likelihood that it will be dissolved. Its strength with the denominations is growing with the decline of denominationalism and the rise of the determination for a united church. Meanwhile, it has brought about a measure of Protestant unity never before achieved. This unity has been particularly notable in regard to the stand of the churches on world peace to which more than one "big navy" Congressman has borne emphatic witness. ✓

In addition to the agencies created on behalf of world peace there are a considerable number of denominationally supported "Social Service Commissions" whose business it is to give some practical effect to the numerous and often far-reaching pronouncements of the various churches on industrial issues. The work of such groups is largely educational. Strictly speaking they have not gone into politics. That is probably due, not to any timidity about politics, but to the fact that industrial ques-

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tions, for the most part, are not being settled politically. As a matter of fact, however, they have taken sides on issues as far removed as politics from those matters which once were held to be the exclusive concern of the church. They took sides, for example, against the twelve-hour-day in the steel industry, with pronounced effect; against coercive measures in the Passaic, New Jersey, textile strike; against the tactics of "company police" in the Pennsylvania coal districts; on behalf of a Child Labor Amendment to the Constitution, and in support of many other legislative measures designed to benefit the workingman. In other words, they have "meddled". And the fact that their "meddling", in the main, has been non-political, has not changed the nature or lessened the bitterness of the criticism to which they have been subjected.

In addition to the activities of specially designated organizations, the churches are active in politics in a variety of other ways. It is a rare church convention, in fact, whose resolutions committee fails to secure the adoption of at least one declaration of political policy, one statement of opinion upon a question that is up for political settlement. This applies not only to the official assemblies of the various denominations. The list of political pronouncements in such assemblies is generally a rather long one. But it applies to a wide variety of other gatherings, ranging all the way from Christian En-

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deavor Conventions to the annual meetings of the various mission boards. That a convention of evangelical churchmen could adjourn without a "ringing declaration" to the President and Congress on the subject of prohibition, for example, is as inconceivable as that they could convene without prayer.

It should be apparent, therefore, that the Methodists have been joined in politics by their brethren of a rather large number of other denominations. It should be evident, too, that their political interests, active and united as they still are on behalf of prohibition, are by no means confined to that question. The churches, increasingly united, have gone into politics on a variety of those moral issues to the solution of which they are committed, and which for their solution require political action. Even the Southern Baptists, whose sentiment against the church in politics is especially strong, stand ready to demonstrate the effectiveness of their political zeal if, as in the case of the teaching of evolution, the occasion should arise. Similarly, the Roman Catholic Church, which disclaims any political interest or activity whatsoever, can be counted upon to go into action when measures affecting its program, and particularly its educational program, come to a political issue.

The occasions for the church in politics, therefore, differ widely. But the fact of the church in politics can hardly be gainsaid. And a long, hard fight lies

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ahead of those who are now attempting to bring about its disfranchisement. The interest of the churches in issues whose settlement involves political action is not declining. Rather, it is on the increase. This is apparent in the place which the question of world peace, and all its attendant problems, is coming to occupy in the denominational programs; and in the more slowly but just as surely developing concern for the various problems of industrial justice and interracial relationships. As long as American institutions remain democratic, it is not likely that the churches will either be frightened or fooled by those who may seek to establish political prohibitions against them which are invoked against no other voluntary association of citizens.

But it is a fundamental fact that the churches of the United States have gone into politics exclusively on behalf of moral issues and never for their own ecclesiastical or temporal aggrandizement. This fact qualitatively distinguishes between the political activities of the churches of the present and of certain other periods of Christian history. The right of the church in politics for its own temporal ends can certainly not be defended in a democracy, if it can be defended at all. But the right of the church in politics on moral issues cannot be abridged, in a democracy, without abridging the workings of the democracy itself.

On moral matters it is difficult to see how modern

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Christianity could have avoided politics. Modern Christianity has given a constantly increasing recognition to the social teachings of Jesus. It is, in large measure, the practical effect of that recognition that has increased the political concerns of the Church.

To Christian thought of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it was the individual that mattered. The chief business of the church—its only important business—was with the individual's soul and its salvation. It was this primarily individualistic mission that Bunyan portrayed in *Pilgrim's Progress*. And the theology of *Pilgrim's Progress* found emphatic, and only slightly less colorful presentation in most of the pulpits of Protestantism. Preachers were concerned to convert men to a new relationship to God. There was less concern, but probably as great need, that they be converted to a new relationship to their fellowmen.

But about the middle of the nineteenth century the incompleteness of this doctrine of individual salvation began to be recognized by thoughtful Christians. The process of the sanctification of the individual did not appear to be adequate to bring in the better world to which the church was pledged. While inside the church, man, in his individual relationship, was being converted to God, outside the church, in his social relationship, he was busy constructing institutions which were essentially pagan. The converted individual was frequently indifferent

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to the conversion of society. And as a result the plan to build the Kingdom of Heaven by simply "saving" individual Christians came to be discredited not, as Reinhold Niebuhr points out, "because moral character is dispensable to a wholesome social life, but because the criteria of moral character have been too individualistic to serve the needs of modern society . . . Society is always in need of integrated personalities. But the validity of the religious ideal must finally be judged by its capacity to create not only unified personalities but personalities which know how to restrain their expansive desires for the sake of social peace."⁴

The emphasis upon individualism had tended to the development of a compartmented religion; an experience so personal and so "inner" it was often cut off from the light of day and from any relationship to the day's transactions. A sharp line was drawn between the sacred and the secular. The church, according to Bishop McConnell,⁵ "had taken the restricted set of personal duties as sacred duties and had left the broader social and political realms to the kingdom of the secular; or, at least, the religiously indifferent".

The active practice of Christianity, therefore, tended to be segregated to a too limited area of the individual's life. On Thursday night and on Sunday

⁴ *Does Civilization Need Religion?* pp. 231, 232 (Macmillan).

⁵ *Christian Citizenship*, p. 9 (Abingdon).

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the converted man appeared to testify to his personal religious experience. And the church, too frequently, was content with that, when a little inquiry might have revealed the slight connection between his personal testimony once or twice a week and his social testimony during the bulk of the time that remained. It is perhaps the chief contribution of the social gospel that it has begun the establishment of such a connection.

With this emphasis Christians have begun to discover that man is not an isolated, but a socially related being; that he never has lived, and in the modern world most of all, he never can live, apart from society. They have come to see, further, that man's social environment has a very real bearing upon his personal life; that an unchristian social order is a decided hindrance to the development of individual Christians. Finally, with the social gospel, the churches have begun to hold men accountable, not only for their personal Christian characters but for their share in the creation of a society that is more friendly to the creation of Christian characters in others and more conducive to the development of that abundant life which is the Christian's heritage.

The church, during this period, has had a remarkable succession of the prophets of the social gospel. Among them have been Frederick Dennison Maurice and Charles Kingsley in England; Frances Willard, Walter Rauschenbush, Josiah Strong,

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Washington Gladden and, more recently, Bishop Francis J. McConnell, Prof. Harry F. Ward, Professor Reinhold Niebuhr and Dr. Sidney Gulick in the United States. The voices of these men and women and of many others have been raised on behalf of God's redemptive purposes for present day society. They have brought the "good old gospel" down to cases, whether the cases concerned the state of a man's soul or the relationship that he and the social order he supported had established to the souls and the bodies of others. Their preaching has brought Jesus and the Prophets from the sanctuary into the street and has begun to put the practice of Christianity on a seven-day week. Meddlesome and discommoding it certainly has been. But out of it has come the significant stirring of a Christian social conscience. Christians who had long been zealous for the redemption of the individual were helped by these modern prophets to understand how that redemption, for its fulfilment, required the regeneration of society.

Devotion to the task of that regeneration made some measure of political activity inevitable. "The evil tradition which is not yet abandoned," writes P. B. Bull,⁶ "that Christianity has nothing to do with politics and economics has banished God from ninety-five per cent of the life of man. For politics and economics regulate homes, housing, schools,

⁶ *The Return of Christendom*, p. 224.

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education, wages, sanitation, industry and commerce, with all the relationships which these involve. If this ninety-five per cent of the life of the people is dissociated from God and from religion, what wonder is it if they feel that God does not count in the battle of life?"

It is unfortunate, of course, that the social gospel and the interests to which it gives rise have been set off, in the minds of many people, as something different from and, therefore, less desirable than the "old" gospel of personal religious experience. This attitude, doubtless, is in part a result of the all-embracing enthusiasm with which the social gospel was propagated. As Dr. Jefferson points out the word "social" was at once "advanced to the chief place at the Christian feast. A Christian could not keep his tongue or his pen off that word 'social'. Everything became social . . . Even the Deity was socialized". But, as Dr. Jefferson also indicates, the social gospel, itself, was not new. Its significance had only been newly discovered. "It was an extension of the old gospel of God's redeeming love. It was the spreading of the old gospel over greater areas of life. It was the application of the principles of the old gospel to wider spheres of human conduct. It was the carrying of the light of the old gospel into regions which had lain hitherto outside the boundaries laid down by Christian leaders." ⁷

⁷ *Christianizing a Nation*, pp. 83, 84 (Doubleday-Doran).

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Today the tendency, even among the staunchest advocates of the social gospel, is toward a re-emphasis upon personal religion as its starting point. There is a wider recognition now than ever before that the source of a transforming social faith must be found in a personal experience of the reality of God. The social gospel is the expression of this experience in the field of human relationships. But prophetic spokesmen for our modern faith, as for the faith of ancient Israel, insist that one test of the validity of that personal experience must be found in the social expression that it calls forth. The voice of the prophet in the land has usually been unmistakable and is unmistakable today, because, like Jesus, it speaks on the sins of today's society with an authority not lodged in the prophet himself but ordained by the God with whom he has communed.

In present-day religious gatherings one frequently hears the expression "the Christian way of life". That, I believe, has come to be much more than a phrase. It reflects the fact that Christians have started to return to Jesus' interpretation of the inclusiveness of religion. Jesus refused to consider any part of life as beyond God's concern and the church, today, is learning to accept His position. It is an essential part of that acceptance to refuse to be barred from any area of human activity in which the purposes of God, as Jesus revealed them, can

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be realized or thwarted. It is this that has brought organized Christianity into head-on conflict with industrial oppression, racial injustice, war, and all manner of social evils, including the liquor traffic. In short, it is this that has put the church in politics. Had the church stayed out of politics a good many people would have been more comfortable and some institutions more secure. But the establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven—the task to which Jesus sent His disciples—would have been considerably more remote.

Not everyone will agree that the church in politics is an asset in the creation of a Christian social order. But, however unwise its political actions, that, I believe, has been its only purpose. As I have already indicated the church, in all the welter of interests represented in politics, is almost the only agency that has no self-interests to serve. There are said to be between one hundred and twenty and one hundred and fifty permanently established lobbies in Washington. They cover every conceivable interest—farm, labor, steel, railroads, public utilities, tobacco, fertilizer, cotton, packing, oil—that has a stake in legislation and can muster power enough to influence legislators. But the stake of these interests, however legitimate, is selfish—no one denies that—and the influence they exert is for their own gain. The churches, too, are listed among the lobbies, either directly or through their constituted organiza-

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tions; but their stake in politics is of a different sort. They are not now and never have been out to gain political favor or prestige, neither government subsidy nor state recognition nor ecclesiastical preferment, for themselves. I have already referred to the causes which they have backed—prohibition, disarmament, the World Court, the Outlawry of War, the Child Labor Amendment and others. To list these causes is to indicate that the churches have exerted political influence, not in their own interests as ecclesiastical bodies, but on behalf of moral and social ideals in the realization of which they have no material stake whatsoever.

Here, doubtless, is an explanation of much of the bitter opposition that has been aroused. Many of those who are most notably silent regarding the presence in politics of all manner of selfish interests are most voluble in condemnation of the church. The reason, often, is not far to seek. The churches in politics cannot be catalogued. They cannot be handled or silenced by any of the customary forms of political coercion. Their appraisal of an issue is moral rather than expedient. They are, therefore, unsettling. With selfish—and not always moral—interests so powerful in politics, it is small wonder that the activities of the churches are attacked.

Now the fact that the church goes into politics exclusively in the interests of social and moral ideals does not, of course, guarantee it against error. The

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law in Tennessee that prohibits the teaching of "any theory that denies the divine creation of man as taught in the Bible" is doubtless a mark of the political influence of the church and an indication that that influence may be wrongly exerted. But the risk of such mistakes is not peculiar to the church in politics. It is peculiar to democracy. A democratic government recognizes the likelihood of mistakes. But such a government does not prohibit political action to those who make them. On the contrary, it asserts the conviction that popular judgment, "the rectitude of human impulse," as Jefferson put it, will finally set them right. Incidentally, one could wish that most of the mistakes of our democracy had their source in motives no more selfish and no less likely to be corrected than those behind the unfortunate Bible Law in Tennessee.

With due regard, therefore, for its human frailties it still remains true that the church in the United States today is in politics simply because politics is one agency whereby the extension of its moral ideals will be furthered or delayed. The church has not injected moral issues into politics. They were there long before the first political parson became concerned over their fate. The churches, doubtless, would keep clear of politics if politics kept clear of morals. But politics has always involved moral questions and probably always will. At present, therefore, the churches are no more likely to surrender

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their right to political action than politicians are likely to ignore those social and international issues which affect the modern Christian's conceptions of the aims of Christ. As long as the forces of unrighteousness are in politics the forces of righteousness, in brief the churches, are likely to remain there.

Chapter Two

The Current Outcry

FOR stepping out of what is held to be its conventional rôle and into politics the church, of course, is roundly condemned. The condemnation varies with its source. To the wets the church in politics wears a long face, a tall hat, a Prince Albert coat and carries an umbrella. To the jingoes, it is portrayed as the consort of pacifists and others of doubtful loyalty. To the economic reactionaries the church in politics is made in the image of Bolshevism. From whatever angle, the picture is a sorry one.

Save for the illustrative details, however, there is nothing new about it; and nothing uniquely modern in the demand that the church confine its regenerative influence to the individual and let society take care of itself. The kings of Israel held the same bitter opinion about the too-specific prophets that harassed them. They lacked only newspapers and cartoonists. The priestly financiers who maintained and profited by the ecclesiastical order in Palestine knew nothing about Bolshevism. But they knew the precincts to which religion ought properly, and for

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the safety of everybody concerned, to be confined. And their piety was outraged when Jesus began to mix religion with all sorts of ideas about wealth and economic justice and social tolerance, ideas, obviously, which were not the business of religion at all. Similarly, Rome, which had tolerated all manner of religions, found that it could not tolerate the first century Christians chiefly because their Christianity involved certain specific and upsetting attitudes and activities toward the state. The persecutions were aimed to get the church out of politics. So there is nothing new in the demand that the church give up "meddling" and return to "the good old gospel". Such a demand, George Bernard Shaw points out, has always been "the favorite defensive resort of the people who, consciously or subconsciously, are quite determined not to have their property meddled with by Jesus or any other reformer."¹ That opinion may be too general. But it is difficult, when one follows the current outcry, not to accept it.

Nor is the validity of the demand necessarily established because its source, frequently, is ecclesiastical. The church has always had both priests and prophets; priests who frequently and probably with all honesty sought to keep "the good old gospel" unsullied from the world, and prophets who strove to use it for the world's regeneration. The conflict between them goes back at least as far as the eighth

¹ G. B. Shaw, *Androcles and the Lion*, Preface.

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century before Christ. It continues down to the present. Some measure of priestly opposition, in fact, is one of the few things that can be safely counted on in any prophetic movement. Whenever, in the long history of religious progress, some prophetic spirit has come before the presence of the established order to cry out against it, there have always been some priestly defenders to trot out the Ark of the Covenant and dance before it through the streets of the city to reassure the populace that an aloof and non-interfering God still kept Himself safely concealed within the sanctuary. That was true of the Jeremiah who spoke his mind on the sins of society in the days of Josiah's kingship over Judah. It has been true of every Jeremiah since.

Now the opposition of ecclesiastical spokesmen to the church in politics customarily revolves around two considerations. It is contended, in the first instance, that the church must keep out of politics in order to preserve its own ecclesiastical organization in prosperity and peace. Politics is held to be a divisive influence. And the church, obviously, cannot afford division. A Southern preacher, determined to spare his church from the weakening influence of such activity, declared recently: "the church must not go into personal and party politics because of the results in her own life. The first result is the division of the church herself . . . If one looks

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about today upon the condition of Protestant Christianity he will see divisions enough.”²

I have just read a detailed statement in which a prominent Methodist bishop seeks to prove, from the history of his own denomination, the inexpediency of political action. It is enough for today that the church in politics has led to trouble in the past. And this statement is a brief review of the political blunders of his particular church. It begins with Wesley's ill-advised counsel to Wesleyan preachers in America in 1775; records and condemns the adoption by the Methodist conference in Baltimore in 1784 of a rule prohibiting members of the newly formed church to hold slaves; and criticizes the abolitionist activities of Bishop Coke at about the same time as “damaging Methodism no little.”³ Like convictions were recently set forth by another prominent ecclesiastic who had before him a class of young preachers for ordination. The young men were warned by their superior that the people of their territory were “not in sympathy with preachers who meddle in politics. If you preachers take part in politics it will ruin your influence and wreck your church.”⁴ This church, in this man's opinion, “is more powerful on its knees than writing resolutions.”⁵

² Quoted in *The Challenge*, Nov., 1929.

³ *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, July 14, 1929.

⁴ Braxton, W. Va., *Democrat*, Sept. 12, 1929.

⁵ *Literary Digest*, Sept. 12, 1929.

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Such a conviction, of course, finds an immediate and hearty welcome in certain sections of the press. "Bishop Denny," declares the Birmingham News, "understands that the Kingdom preached by all ministers and bishops of his religious communion is truly 'not of this world'. He is aware that when bishops, or even ministers of his religious communion intervene in purely political matters—intervene in mass form as bishops or as ministers—that moment they are divested of the spiritual office that inheres in their holy office . . . At the moment Bishop Denny is in the minority in the Methodist Episcopate . . . But he may be comforted with the thought that, in matters like this one, 'one man . . . and God are a majority'. His isolation may be likened to that of the Master—the Master who reminded His taunters to render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's." ⁶

The News, undoubtedly, is right on one point at least. Bishop Denny, in the Methodist episcopate, is in a minority. How long he will remain there no one can say. Reports have drifted from the South and into the wet press of a "revolt" among Southern Methodists, designed to take the church out of politics, completely and for all time. There are many, doubtless, who would be greatly comforted by such a revolution. Pending its bona fide appearance, how-

⁶ *Literary Digest*, July 27, 1929.

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ever, one can afford to be skeptical. Methodists, North and South, and their brothers of many other denominations, went into politics on the trail of liquor. They are not likely to leave politics until liquor does.

Meanwhile, there are other ecclesiastical arguments against the church in politics than those of expediency. It is maintained, for example, that when the church goes into politics, on behalf of any issue whatsoever, it abandons its primary function for activities with which legitimately it has no concern. Preachers, so these clerical advisors hope, should "stick to their last," preach the "good old gospel," set forth the broad principles of life and let specific policies take care of themselves. Thus, declares Bishop James E. Freeman of the Protestant Episcopal Diocese of Washington, D. C., the church's place "as the conservor of things ethical and spiritual is undisputed. It has to do with principles rather than policies."

And Dr. Caleb R. Stetson writes in the Year Book of Old Trinity Episcopal Church, New York City, "the church's real business is to deal with the souls of men . . . There seems to be a desire to make the clergyman the directing head of a corporation giving his attention to general subjects such as world peace, law enforcement, prohibition, disarmament, etc., while committees under his direction care for the individuals who may come to church. The in-

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creasing political activity of the churches has caused many people grave anxiety and many have given up their church membership because of it. They felt that these churches were giving their interest and influence to objects outside their proper sphere and were neglecting the souls in order to further some political measure. The political activities of churches and denominations which have become so strikingly a feature of our national life since the passing of the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution is definitely hurting religion in this country."

It would be illuminating to have some further exposition of that last declaration that the church in politics is definitely hurting religion in this country. Certainly it is stirring up criticism if that is what is meant. But that fact will not be a cause for too much alarm. Organized Christianity, in other periods than the present, has prospered on criticism. Whether many individuals have actually given up their church membership because preachers have given too much attention to "such subjects as world peace, law enforcement, prohibition, disarmament, etc.", is a question that will bear more investigation. One recalls, however, a statement of Reinhold Niebuhr to the effect that "for every person who disavows religion because some ancient and unrevised dogma outrages his intelligence, several become irreligious because the social impotence of

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religion outrages their conscience.”⁷ Dr. Stetson points out that “multitudes are ready to come to church” if they can be convinced that the church will attend to their souls and shun political issues. But there is, I believe, no statistical evidence to indicate that such multitudes are turning from the churches that are held to be in politics or toward those which keep out. On the contrary, quite the opposite would seem to be the case—that is, if growth can be taken as an indication of the interest of the multitudes.

But support for Dr. Stetson’s contention that the church in politics abandons its chief function for matters not its concern comes from many others, both within and without his own denomination. Particularly outspoken on this point are certain fundamentalist groups. Thus the Moody Bible Institute Monthly, in a recent issue, notes that the Federal Council of Churches, the National Catholic Welfare Council and the Central Conference of American Rabbis have joined in a protest against what is held to be the unjust imprisonment of certain members of the Industrial Workers of the World in a city of the Northwest.

“Why”, asks this magazine, “should the churches do this . . . It is a good work to which these religious bodies have set themselves, but is it their best work? Is it the work to which they were divinely called? And if they were to show the same unity and

⁷ R. Niebuhr, *Does Civilization Need Religion?* p. 12 (Macmillan).

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energy in the latter, might it not be that both the American Legion and the I. W. W. would reap greater benefit in the end?"⁸ And it answers its own questions with a quotation from Jeremiah:

"If they (the prophets) had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way and from the evil of their doing."

But Jeremiah is a poor authority to call in on such a matter. He conceived it as his ministry "to pluck up and break down and overthrow, to build and to plant". In this particular instance, Jehovah was speaking through him against the false prophets. Now, if any one thing characterized the false prophets it was their adherence to "broad principles" and their shunning of anything specific unless it was pleasant. Jeremiah and the prophets of his age stand out in religious history, as we shall see in a later chapter, chiefly because they made it their business to "interfere" in all manner of matters which, conventionally, were held to be outside the scope of religion. Jeremiah himself has a good deal to say about the treatment of the I. W. W.'s of the period. When the Jewish nobility, by treachery, brought back into bondage the slaves that had been liberated in a time of national crisis, Jeremiah was very concrete and not very restrained about it.

"Thus saith Jehovah", he cried, "ye have not

⁸ *Moody Bible Institute Monthly*, Jan., 1930.

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hearkened unto me to proclaim liberty, every man to his neighbor; behold I proclaim unto you a liberty, saith Jehovah, to the sword, the pestilence and the famine".⁹

When the king, absorbed with certain building enterprises, resorted to forced labor, Jeremiah had words of condemnation beside which the contemporary resolutions of indignant churchmen are mild. And the authorities of the day knew the kind of a radical with which they had to deal. Only the fact of Jeremiah's persistent meddling in questions of economics and politics accounts for the repeated efforts that were made to assassinate him.

There is, probably, some Scriptural support for the contentions of those who insist that the church, acting on behalf of men unjustly imprisoned, is beyond its proper province. But that support will not be found in Jeremiah or any other of the eighth century prophets. They were evangelists to man and to society and for that last they paid severely. But they are generally held to have prepared the way for the Messiah.

But this opposition to the church in politics from within the church itself is almost colorless when read along with the statements of non-ecclesiastics on the subject. In fact, the presence of the church in politics has brought to light at least one notable and, I suppose, reassuring fact. It has revealed with

⁹ Jeremiah, 34:17.

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what deep, sometimes passionate, solicitude the well-being of the church is held in the most unexpected quarters. And one can regard, in the same light, the reverent concern of the Congressman who recently spoke, with almost sermonic piety, upon the violation of the teachings and the aims of Christ which was involved in the adoption of the Prohibition Amendment to the Constitution of the United States.

Thus, the authors of "Pastors, Politicians, Pacifists", a book aimed, primarily, against the Federal Council of Churches, declare in their introduction that "the present general uprising against the extra-religious activities of powerful leaders of ecclesiastical organizations and appurtenant societies is an uprising, not of men and women who despise religion but of men and women who *love* religion and who earnestly seek to perpetuate the correct interpretation of it, as the only hope for our civilization."

But whether with religious justification or without it, the literature against the church in politics is widespread. Its language, for the most part, is emphatic when it is not actually unrestrained. In the city of Washington, D. C., there is or was published a monthly periodical "The Challenge". Volume One, Number One, of The Challenge appeared in August, 1929. At its mast-head, in bold-face display type appeared the slogan: "For President in 1932—Hon.

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Alfred E. Smith." The same slogan, to which no possible exception can be taken, appeared in the September and October issues, to disappear in the issue of November. Although I promptly subscribed for "The Challenge", the issues of December and January have not, at this writing (late February) been received. But in Volume one, number one, The Challenge states as its aim:

"To destroy the political power of the Methodist Church and its allies by organizing the enemies of intolerance, regardless of their political or religious beliefs, into a body which we hope will assume national proportions. It is our belief that orderly government and the fundamental principles of democracy are seriously threatened by the political activities of this church, and that unless they can be successfully throttled, they will throttle the nation".

Perhaps, judging from the non-arrival of those December and January issues, this purpose has already been achieved. At any rate, as the Arkansas Methodist observes, it does seem a bit "unfair to the splendid Baptists and Presbyterians and many others who have been fighting for civic righteousness to give the Methodists practically all the credit for the Eighteenth Amendment."

The current outcry against the church in politics has, on several occasions, led to threats of legislative action. Thus, in 1927, Congressman Arthur M. Free introduced a resolution in the United States House

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of Representatives calling for a Congressional investigation of the Federal Council of Churches, and of its alleged activities on behalf of world peace and, in particular, against the seventy-one cruiser bill which was presented and subsequently revised downward by the sixty-ninth session of Congress. At an earlier date, Assemblyman Louis Cuvillier introduced a resolution for the same purpose in the New York State Assembly. At intervals of every few months similar threats are made against the Board of Prohibition, Temperance and Public Morals, and the Anti-Saloon League.

So far these intermittent proposals have come to nought. Congressman Free told an official of the Federal Council after his resolution was introduced that it was "dead; that he had no intention of reintroducing it and no grounds for doing so." The proposal of the New York Assemblyman was tabled and, for three years now, has remained in that ineffectual status. The outbursts against other church organizations have had their day on the front pages and then they, too, slipped into oblivion.

This, I think, is unfortunate. These organizations, in varying degree, are the official creations of the churches of the United States. They speak with some authority and with significant influence upon a wide variety of important issues. They are widely held to be at the business of influencing legislation on certain issues. If this is true—and I believe it is

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true—then the more we know about them the better. If a small part of the accusations leveled against these organizations have any merit, it is high time that the churches scrapped them altogether and either abstained, entirely, from any active interest in these particular matters, or else created new agencies to represent them. I believe that the church, on moral matters, will remain in politics. But I do not believe that it can afford to seek to advance these moral matters by any but moral and American methods.

Perhaps it is the lack of anything scandalous to investigate that has led these critics of the church in politics to confine their investigations to the threat. It is always easier, as almost any day's headlines will indicate, to "charge" than to substantiate. And Congressional investigations, for all the futility that sometimes seems to characterize them, do have a painstaking way of turning up actual conditions. Moreover, if there were much fire beneath all this smoke, the churches themselves would have been likely to discover it. It can be fairly said, I think, that the consciences of church leaders, lay and clerical, are no less sensitive than those who condemn their leadership. Moreover, the action of the organizations which these churches support is subject to periodical review by official church assemblies. These assemblies, as I have already indicated, are constituted in the same democratic fashion as the

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legislative assemblies of the nations. Their membership represents the same honest type of citizenship, and is of itself a cross-section of it. Ideals fully as high and quite as completely American dominate their proceedings. The Presbyterian General Assembly or the Northern Baptist Convention or the General Conference of the Methodist Church would, no more than Congress, be consciously a party to activities of the sort which are charged against the bodies which these churches assist to maintain. Still, the issue has been raised and the accusations put on record. In the interest of clarity and to get the matter once and for all outside the range of charge and counter-charge it would, I believe, be Congressional time well spent if one or another of these repeatedly threatened investigations were allowed to materialize.

Meanwhile, it is hardly necessary to cite any further evidence from the mass of available material against the church in politics. That material comes readily to hand through newspapers, magazines and last, but not least, the Congressional record. Some of the opinions expressed are ill-founded, some of them represent fanaticism. But I think it would be a serious error to conclude that none of them have any basis in fact. The presence of the church in politics, however justifiable, is fraught with very tangible perils which no apologist for its presence there can afford to ignore.

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I indicated in the previous chapter that the church may be said to go into politics whenever it seeks to direct political opinion or to shape political action. Reference was also made in that chapter to certain of the specific issues on which the present-day church is actually in politics. These specific questions—peace, prohibition, industrial justice and others—the church conceives to be moral issues. The feeling, I believe, is universally held among American churchmen that, if the church goes into politics at all its activities there should be strictly confined to such moral issues. Certainly there is no other position that would be either tenable or safe. And American churches, so far as I know, have never gone into politics save on behalf of what they conceived to be moral issues.

None-the-less, there are, in my opinion, two dangers at this point. I do not mean that there is any likelihood that the churches will not continue to confine their political interests to moral issues. But I do mean that there is, first, the danger that the church, zealously bent on a moral mission, may align itself with interests and utilize tactics which are not altogether moral. It is indefensible, for example, for the churches to support dubious politicians merely because they are dry, or endorse dubious political procedure merely because it appears to advance the dry cause. And ecclesiastical demagoguery is worse than any other because its evils are sheltered behind

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purposes which, of themselves, are probably good. Sooner or later the moral significance of the political aims of the churches will sink or rise to the level on which they fight for them.

There is a second danger, namely, that the churches, in their eagerness to advance a moral cause, may be used to advance other causes which are partisan and not necessarily moral. Such a development, even though it constituted no violation of the doctrine of the separation of church and state, would nevertheless be certain to weaken both the moral and the spiritual leadership of the church. As long as the church confines itself to moral problems, its political activities are defensible. In so far as it goes beyond moral issues, in just so far is it outside its proper province and any case that might be made for its presence in politics collapses.

This consideration comes prominently to the fore in the endorsement of specific political parties or specific party candidates. In ordinary situations the function of the church in regard to specific candidates and their relation to specific issues should, it seems to me, be informative rather than directional. The political action of the individual church member will then depend upon the effectiveness with which the church, previously, has carried on its work of education on the moral problem at issue. And despite propaganda to the contrary, this has been the principle that the churches have followed.

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Any other course involves serious dangers. If a vote for a particular party or a certain candidate meant a vote, one way or another, on a specific moral issue and on nothing else, then there would probably be less danger at this point. It occasionally happens, particularly in local elections, that only a single serious issue is involved. If that is a moral issue, then a church espousing that issue will probably speak out in specific terms. But every major party, in these days, carries more than one plank in its platform. Support of one party is likely, therefore, to involve not only an endorsement of one plank, but of a number. And unfortunately a candidate that may be right on one pressing moral issue may be wrong on others, which to certain people seem to be equally pressing. Thus, when a church seeks for the election of a specific candidate or the success of a specific party it is likely to be in politics not only on moral issues but on all sorts of issues, moral and otherwise, which are peculiar to that party.

In the presidential election of 1928 this problem was very much discussed and variously resolved. It seemed to many prohibitionists that a vote for Alfred E. Smith was a vote against our present dry laws, and a vote for Herbert Hoover a vote in favor of those laws. This, doubtless, was true but it was not the whole truth. I am acquainted with a number of churchmen who were convinced that, in

the last election, the most serious moral issue was not prohibition but certain economic questions, and who believed that a vote for Mr. Smith meant support for a more liberal labor and industrial policy and a vote for Mr. Hoover support for a more conservative program. On those grounds they voted for Mr. Smith.

There can be no doubt, however, that many of the churches in that election believed prohibition to be the paramount question and, for that reason, gave support to the Republican candidate. Individual churchmen and church papers actively worked for the election of Mr. Hoover and an occasional unofficial church-gathering endorsed his candidacy. So far as I know no such action was taken by the official governing body of any Protestant denomination. But the general intent was hardly altered by that fact. The churches that stood for prohibition stood for Mr. Hoover and against Mr. Smith.

It is difficult to see how they could have done otherwise. With all due allowance for those who found other moral matters at stake, the plain fact still remains that Mr. Smith's election would have been accepted as a wet mandate and that Mr. Hoover's election, however it has been explained since, was regarded as essential to the success of prohibition. It should be noted, too, that it was not the activities of the churches, but of one of the

candidates that made it necessary, in this case, to make such specific endorsement. The first aim of the dries was to secure law enforcement planks in both platforms. This they succeeded in doing, both at Kansas City and at Houston. Had both candidates accepted these law enforcement planks the church drive for Mr. Hoover and against Mr. Smith would never have assumed the significant proportions that it did and could not so readily be justified. But Mr. Smith repudiated the law-enforcement plank and came out positively for modification. His action was a direct challenge to the forces that had established prohibition and, in the hope that a party alliance would be unnecessary, had secured dry planks in the two party platforms. Prohibition, by the action of Mr. Smith, was made a partisan issue so far as the 1928 election was concerned. And the churches that had stood for prohibition had no alternative, unless they proposed at such a critical time to abandon the cause entirely, but to advocate the same stand at the polls that they had always advocated when this issue was at stake.

It should be noted, however, that the current outcry is aimed not only to deny the privilege of the churches to endorse specific candidates, but also to abridge their right of petition. The previous chapter indicated with what effect the churches have exercised and are continuing to exercise that right.

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Church opinion, in many ways, is making itself felt on specific measures that come before our state and national legislatures. Congress is obliged to give ear to frequent attacks upon church lobbies which are out to influence legislation. But it is probable that such influence will continue to be exerted, for moral questions do come to a specific and definite issue in legislation. The confusion involved in supporting a particular candidate is generally not involved in supporting a particular legislative measure.

A church committed to prohibition, and which might hesitate to oppose, officially, the candidacy of Alfred E. Smith, would not be likely to hesitate to put itself on record in opposition to a Congressional measure to modify the Volstead Act. Similarly, without making world peace an election issue, many of the churches have declared their stand on such definite legislative measures as the Seventy-one Cruiser Bill, American adherence to the World Court and the ratification of the Pact to Outlaw War. It is in such action, supported by the opinion of their memberships on what are held to be moral questions, that the most constructive political influence of the churches can be exerted. And it is hardly probable that that influence will be surrendered.

The churches thus are in politics, and the vehemence with which they are attacked is at least an indication that their presence there is a "live"

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issue. To discuss that issue with particular reference to the historical and religious background of Christianity and in relation to certain definite questions on which the churches today are committed, will be the purpose of the remainder of this book.

Chapter Three

Troublers of Israel

THE phenomenon of the church in politics is no more novel or modern than the current outcry against it. Religion and politics have been inextricably mixed from the very beginning of the Christian tradition. Political parsons—some wise, some foolish, all exceedingly cocksure—stride across almost every page of Old Testament history. No questions, great or small, were reckoned to be outside the scope of their aggressive interest. Prophets were prophets not only because they knew the will of God, but because they were able to give that knowledge meaning in terms of the political and social order. When religion in the Old Testament became vital it became social and political. It is the current appreciation of that fact that accounts in some measure for the rise of the social gospel and the presence of the modern church in politics. ✓

“At a time when the world’s ethical and political ideals were yet unborn they (the prophets) proclaimed principles of national life that have endured the corroding influences of the ages. They held up

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before their people a vision of politics and society founded upon justice and righteousness, a commonwealth free from folly and oppression. . . . It was that vision without which a people perish." ¹

The roster of Israel's religious politicians is a long one, much too long to be listed here. It begins in the book of Exodus and runs through the books of the prophets. And in every book religion and politics are inseparably allied. In fact, the Jews found, after long and hard experience, that it was dangerous to leave God out of politics. The Jehovah that had revealed himself to Moses and brought His people out of Egypt did not abandon them when they undertook to establish themselves in the Promised Land. It seldom occurred to anyone that Jehovah's leadership did not extend over the social relationships and institutions of His people. In fact, such an idea only arose when someone—out of harmony with God's plan—desired to set plans of his own afoot.

And the prophets, who had special religious endowments, were, thus, given places of special political leadership. It is recorded, for example, that the prophet Samuel officiated at the inauguration of King Saul, that he had a decisive hand in determining the fate of two dynasties; that he united the people around the throne, as the king was unable to do, and enabled the nation to stand against the

¹ Oswald Ryan, *The Challenge of the Prophets*, pp. 17, 18.

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invading Philistines. When David came to the throne we are told that he promptly selected Nathan and Gad—obscure prophets—as his political advisors. They took their jobs seriously. Gad denounced many of the political tendencies of the times. When David proposed to take a national census, Gad roundly condemned the idea on the ground that the king's newly-won political power would be better strengthened if he put more faith in God and less in statistics. Nathan, for his part, was no less critical of the king; a fact which evidently did no particular damage to his political standing, for at the end of David's reign he is credited with having determined the succession of Solomon to the throne.

In fact all of the prophets of this early period appear to have been in politics. Not all of them, of course, ran any such political risks. King Ahab is said to have regularly fed a prophetic company of some four hundred at the royal table. These were spokesmen for the administration and they took no chances. They knew the views of their royal patron and when they spoke it was with prudence and in language calculated to fall pleasantly on royal ears. They believed that priests should "stick to their last," preach the good old gospel and refrain from discussing questions about which, obviously, priests could know very little. Thus, when Amos appeared at Bethel with his upsetting proclamation, his

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priestly contemporaries advised him to preach his radicalism elsewhere.

"Get thee gone," they said, "to the land of Judah; eat there thy bread, and play the prophet there." (Amos vii, 12.)

It is characterization enough that Old Testament writers invariably refer to these who counselled caution and sought to be at ease in Zion as "false prophets". Of them it is said that they cried Peace, Peace, when there was no peace, or else they failed to cry at all. In either case their comfortable attitude toward the political and social problems of the day was held to indicate the insufficiency of their religious conceptions. They were in politics, but for their own interests, not on behalf of righteousness. They were condemned not because they were in politics but because their political purposes were purely selfish.

In most cases, however, even in the period before Amos, the prophets took a hand in politics because some ethical issue was at stake. They, like the modern church, had nothing to ask for themselves from the state. Most of them suffered materially for their political excursions. They had no ecclesiastical order to serve. Most of them went their prophetic way alone. They were involved in questions of politics simply because politics involved questions of right and wrong. It is the fact which gave sig-

nificance to their message and that gives it meaning for our present discussion.

The dream of King Ahab and Elijah is a case in point. The climax of the story concerns the vineyard of an otherwise obscure Israelite—Naboth by name. Naboth's vineyard, it seems, joined the property of the King. And the King, looking out across his palace wall, desired to annex the territory of Naboth and so complete a private park upon which his heart was set. He went to Naboth, therefore, and made what appears to have been a very substantial offer for the parcel of land. But Naboth refused to sell. The vineyard, so he said, had been in his family for generations and not even the inducements of the King could persuade him to part with it. And Ahab, knowing the significance of this sentimental attachment to a land-holding Jew, returned to his palace in sore distress.

Whereupon Jezebel, the king's wife, took a hand. Jezebel had been raised in Tyre where ideas of justice and the rights of subjects were less refined than in Israel. She handled Naboth as he would have been handled in Tyre: by murder. And Ahab, without asking too many questions, took over the vineyard and the plans for his work went forward.

But the king in his haste had reckoned without the prophet. Word of Naboth's fate was carried to Elijah, the Tishbite. Elijah had had previous encounters with Ahab. The king had branded him as

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the "troubler of Israel". If the prophet had been out for his own temporal security he would have declared "hands off". But he was out in the interests of righteousness and ready to take the temporal risks. Well aware, therefore, of the kind of a reception he would have, Elijah made haste to go to Samaria. Arriving there, he found that the king was walking in his lately acquired vineyard. To the vineyard Elijah went. Ahab saw him coming.

"Hast thou found me, O mine enemy," he said.

"I have found thee," Elijah replied, "because thou has sold thyself to do that which is evil in the sight of Jehovah. Behold I will bring evil upon thee . . ."

And he did. Before the conflict ended it had cost the dynasty the throne and Jezebel her life. When Elijah, grim and unafraid, faced the king, it was as the very incarnation of prophetic justice and the divine right of the people. He had not chosen to enter the controversy. But because injustice had been done he could not keep out. Ahab, doubtless, knew a lot more than Elijah about Samaria's need for a park. Parks—as the king might have pointed out—were not a priestly specialty. But Elijah claimed to know a lot more than Ahab about the will of Jehovah. And by the murder of Naboth this particular park became a problem, not for the king but for Jehovah. It was, therefore, one of the validating marks of Elijah's prophetic ministry that he

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spoke out. Only false prophets, in such a situation, could have kept silent.

It was, in fact, this ethical quality in the religion of the Old Testament that chiefly distinguished it from paganism. Jehovah was a tribal deity whose special function it was to look after the welfare of his chosen people. But every nation had its particular national gods with functions that were very much the same. It remained for the religious leaders of Israel, and particularly the Eighth Century prophets, to identify their God with righteousness and to give Him, by that fact, a significance that transcended the nation's boundaries and survived the nation's fate. But the process of establishing that identity, if it lifted the religion of ancient Israel to its most exalted level, also involved it more inextricably than ever before in affairs of state-craft. The Eighth Century is significant, not only because of certain great principles that its prophets enunciated, but because those principles came directly out of prophetic observations of existing social and political conditions and were specifically applied to the remedying of those conditions. In fact, as in the case of Elijah, the accepted basis for testing the validity of the prophet's message seemed to be found, not in the message itself, but in its application to the situation that called it forth.

The prophets understood the human stuff with which they had to deal. They knew that the preach-

ing of "broad principles" would never do the job that the times required; that it by no means followed that people and kings, when they were confronted with right ideals, would forthwith go out and order their social relationships according to righteousness. They, therefore, took no chances with human frailty, but spoke their prophetic word at the precise place and in terms of the precise situation where it was needed. And prophetic movements that from time to time since then have revitalized religion have proceeded with much the same understanding. Whether the issue was being settled in a king's court or a Congressional committee these spokesmen for righteousness have always been on hand to make their declarations. Small wonder that history's Ahabs have looked upon the world's Elijahs as the "troublers of Israel."

To get the full significance of this quality in the message of the Eighth Century, however, it is necessary to indicate the condition of life in Israel when this remarkable prophetic succession began. Social conditions were anything but healthy. Israel, after dire scourgings at the hands of its God, suddenly found itself at peace and in such a state of comfort and security as it had not known since the days of Solomon's glory. An earlier generation of pioneers, that had known war and defeat, was passing. A new generation, unfamiliar with hardship, had come to authority. The youth of this generation flocked

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to the cities. Commerce and building flourished. With a port on the Red Sea, with business connections in the towns of Phoenicia, with a partial control over the main routes of transportation between Egypt and the North, the nation's trade expanded and its prosperity rapidly increased.

With this prosperity came the attendant evils. Israel had wealth but not sufficient moral strength to determine its proper use. The old simplicity of Jewish life gave way before the commercial ambitions of the nation. In agriculture, peasant landowners were displaced by landed gentry and the poor were left to till the soil in virtual slavery. The crop of idle rich was a large one. They boasted that they were cosmopolitan. Having nothing else to do with their time, they dabbled in all manner of foreign cults; they boasted of their own superiority and particularly of that of their god, Jehovah; they grew increasingly indifferent to social sin and social injustice. The state of Israel's society clearly called for prophets.

So, too, did the state of Israel's religion. A generous portion of the nation's riches was turned to religious account. With wealth and glamorous attentions, vested interests bought off the official stewards of religion and the stewards, as their part of the bargain, devised new and thoroughly modern facilities for removing religion from life. Religion, thus made safe, became popular. Society flocked to

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the places of sacrifice and festival. Of these, probably Bethel was the most important and the most popular. There was good reason for this. The site of the shrine—near the frontier and at the meeting place of many roads—was good for business. Here, therefore, gathered the traders from the West, wool-growers of Moab and the Judæan desert, merchants from Phoenicia and the Philistine coast. And the devout Israelite who came to Bethel was thus able to worship God with a minimum of inconvenience to his business affairs. As a monument to this happy arrangement, a great temple was built. It was filled with many priests, properly endowed by the government, under the ecclesiastical direction of the king and lavishly supported by the grateful gifts of successful trader-worshippers.²

Religious practices reflected this support. Idolatry was widespread. Jehovah was adored in the form of a calf and other images. Ceremonies characteristic of pagan worship and inspired by drunkenness and sexual passion crept in. Jehovah was the center of devotion, but the popular conception of Him, in the words of Dr. George Adam Smith, "had no discipline for the busy mercenary life of the day. Injustice and fraud were rife in the very precincts of the sanctuary. Magistrates and priests alike were smitten with their generation's love of money and did everything for reward. Again and again do the

² George Adam Smith, *The Twelve Prophets*, Vol. I, p. 35 ff.

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prophets speak of bribery. Judges took gifts and perverted the cause of the poor; priests drank mulcted wine and slept on the pledge garments of religious offenders. There was no disinterested service of God or of the commonweal. Mammon was supreme.”³

Of the indifference and other-worldliness of Israel's religion, therefore, there can be no question. The temporal security of religion, not its moral power, was the first concern of the ecclesiastics. Thus the voice of those was in the ascendancy who maintained that, right or wrong, contemporary civilization and its social practices were not matters of religious concern. To have made them matters of concern would have threatened a very prosperous ecclesiastical system; a risk which the spokesmen for religion lacked moral courage to take. Thus, having accepted that dictum, religion began to sink to the level of the social order that it dared not condemn.

It was into such a society that there came this remarkable group of religious leaders who were neither tempted by Israel's wealth nor deceived by her worship. In the face of the current rituals of other-worldliness, they dared to identify religion with individual and social righteousness. They condemned the paraphernalia by which the remoteness of God was maintained and, in the end, revitalized the faith

³ *Idem*, Vol. I, p. 40.

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of Israel with a moral gospel of the present and the particular.

"Will Jehovah be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath showed thee, O man, what is good: and what doth Jehovah require of thee but to do justly and to love kindness and to walk humbly with thy God". "I desire goodness and not sacrifices; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings". "Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth; they are a trouble unto me: I am weary of bearing them . . . Wash you, and make you clean; put away the evil of your doings before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek justice; relieve the oppressed; judge the fatherless; plead for the widow."

It is exceedingly significant for the whole history of the relationship of Christianity to social institutions, that in the Eighth Century before Christ, Old Testament religion was saved from paganism, not by priestly caution but by the meddling and therefore contemporaneously unwelcome messages of this succession of prophets: Amos and Hosea, Jeremiah Deutero-Isaiah, that religious vitality was restored not by taking religion out of politics but by making moral issues its first business; a fact that kept religion in politics since politics afforded one agency by which those issues could be advanced toward set-

tlement. It is significant, for our discussion, that it is to this period and to these, the "troublers of Israel", that the modern Christian returns as having furnished the elements which give to Old Testament religion its uniqueness.

When Amos, the first of the Eighth Century prophets, appeared he went, with prophetic courage, straight to Bethel, where the sins which roused him were at their worst and where his pronouncements and his presence were certain to be most bitterly resented. And one can imagine with what discomfiture the pious patrons of the established order must have received his message when he came down from the Tekoan hills, a simple unordained herdsman to declare before the temple:

"I hate, I despise your feasts and I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Yea, though you offer me your burnt offerings and meal offerings, I will not accept them; neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away the noise of thy songs for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. But let justice roll down as waters and righteousness as a mighty stream."

There, with one sweeping paragraph, Amos laid the foundation for the prophetic message of himself and his successors. It conflicted, item by item, with the popular practices of religion. It set up, in the place of those practices, an ideal which was certain to be neither popular nor widely practiced. It put

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the prophets into immediate conflict with the state because it threatened a system which the state, for its own profit and security, had established.

That last fact, Amos quickly discovered. In his audience, at Bethel, was Amaziah, a one hundred per cent patriot and a priest of the established order. Shocked and not a little alarmed by what he had heard, Amaziah wrote a report of Amos' speech and forwarded it, post-haste, to Jeroboam, the king. Amos, said the priest, was obviously in a conspiracy to overthrow the government. His opinions were clearly intolerable and seditious. He should be deported. And then, pending the king's reply, Amaziah, who seems to have served as official spokesman for Israel's patriotic societies, had a heated conversation with Amos himself. He advised him, at once, to quit Bethel, to return to Judah where prophets had better fare, but, whatever he did, to refrain from any more prophesying around Bethel because, as he pointedly remarked, Bethel "is the king's sanctuary, and it is a royal house." (Amos VII.)

The political implications of what Amos had to say were clear enough, therefore, to bring him into this head-on conflict with the authorities. But the political message of Amos was less pronounced than that of Hosea who followed him on the prophetic stage. Dr. Smith ⁴ declares that, while Hosea, among

⁴ *The Twelve Prophets*, Vol. I, p. 269.

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the prophets, is "the most spiritual of them all, he is at the same time the most political. We owe him an analysis of repentance to which the New Testament has little to add; but he has also left us a criticism of society and of politics in Israel, unrivalled except by Isaiah. We owe him an intellectual conception of God; yet he also is the first to define Israel's position in the politics of Western Asia."

Thus it was, too, with Isaiah, himself, presumably, a son of wealthy parents, related, perhaps, to the royal family and yet called of God to become another figure in this prophetic line that invigorated the religious life of Israel. His message, through forty years of preaching, never ceased to have political and social significance. He mingled freely with the political leaders of the day, observed their intrigues, sought to circumvent them, denounced their godless policies. He rebuked the king to his face for the alliances he had made. He set himself to thwart the rebellion against Assyria and to give emphasis to that purpose he walked three years through the streets of Jerusalem clad as a captive and barefoot. Isaiah has been called the prophet of faith. But his faith was of the applied kind and never far removed from the social and political institutions in which he believed it should be embodied.

The Jews had their *nouveaux riches* who lived by unfair business and unjust political practices. The

city of Jerusalem was filled with them. Under their influence crime and corruption thrived. They held themselves, by virtue of their possessions, to be above the law. It was against them and on behalf of the poor that Isaiah directed his attack.

More than that, Isaiah took a hand in foreign affairs. He warned King Ahaz against entangling the nation with the Assyrians. He advised a firm policy toward the Syrian invaders and when Ahaz disregarded his counsel he prophesied the subjection of Judah. When diplomats came from Egypt to persuade Judah to terminate her alliance with Assyria and enter into an *entente cordiale* with Egypt, Isaiah, again, opposed the plan on the ground that the Egyptians had left God out of their political planning and were relying, instead, upon "chariots because they are many and horsemen because they are strong." In short, Isaiah was in politics whenever politics involved the plan of God and that, as the record of his prophecies indicates, was almost continuously.

Similarly, Jeremiah gave prophetic attention to his nation's foreign policy. In his day, Chaldea had arisen to take the place of Assyria as the great oppressor. The Jews longed for their freedom and looked to Jehovah to provide it. To Jeremiah's mind, however, there was no such easy way out. The Jewish people, because of their wickedness, had lost Jehovah's support. A national calamity was in-

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evitable. And Jeremiah became the prophet of the nation's doom.

Thus almost every chapter in the history of eighth century prophecy carries the record of exalted religious ideals and of their specific social and political application. It is from that record that the Christian tradition takes its rise. The church, today, glories in that tradition, without, however, always endorsing the line of procedure that made the tradition glorious. I once heard of a local organization of ex-soldiers that voted disapproval of a community monument because inscribed on it were certain words of Isaiah regarding war. The prophet, eight centuries before Christ had apparently been too specific for some of us who are twenty centuries advanced in the Christian era. But that is merely an incident. So far as I know, there is no attempt afoot even by the staunchest opponents of the church in politics to dislodge the prophets. And that is a somewhat surprising fact. It is a little difficult to understand the position of those who condemn today's exponents of a society-transforming gospel and, in the same theological breath, hail this prophetic succession of Old Testament religious reformers whose claim to leadership rests, almost exclusively, upon their belief in the society-redeeming purposes of God and their sacrificial efforts to bring those purposes into operation. Historically, it is not impossible to demonstrate that periods of religious creativeness—of prophecy

—differ from periods of religious depression chiefly in the fact that, in a prophetic age, God and His righteous purposes are interpreted in terms of the specific and religion is brought down to cases. But it is often as difficult, or as embarrassing, to make current application of those ancient prophecies as to accord recognition to the social and political emphases of contemporary religion which most clearly resemble them.

It will be argued, doubtless, that the prophets of Israel were in politics because Israel's government was theocratic. The voice of God was the voice of the state. He was believed to have a guiding hand upon all the minutiae of national affairs. For that reason the prophets, who were His spokesmen, were expected to deliver messages of political import.

That, unquestionably, is true. But the social and political precedent set by the eighth century prophets is not thereby altered. The fact that Israel's king and princes were accustomed to prophets did not make these particular prophets any more welcome. Jehovah, ostensibly, ran the state. But an elaborate and profitable ecclesiastical and political system had been built up on the assumption that He would run it in a certain manner. The declarations of the prophets were a positive threat to that system. Those who built and profited by it were no less aroused by that threat than if they, like some of their more modern successors, had never even ostensibly

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taken God into account. As a matter of fact, Amos and Hosea and Isaiah would have gone into politics under any kind of a government, whenever politics involved moral questions or provided an agency by which unrighteousness might be destroyed and righteousness established.

The message of the modern church may fall far short of prophecy; but it acts, none-the-less, in accord with prophetic precedent when its concern for religious truth carries it from the general to the particular and by that route into politics.

Chapter Four

The Good Old Gospel

THERE is some agitation, as we have seen, that organized Christianity give up "meddling" and return to "the good old gospel." But it is not likely that the agitators know exactly what they prescribe. From the standpoint of the enemies of the church in politics nothing could be less desirable than a return to the good old gospel, provided, of course, that the gospel referred to is that of Jesus. If the church, by any chance, should suddenly begin the practice of that gospel the world would have a political, as well as a social and economic revolution on its hands. For it is clear that Jesus' message involves moral ideals which have inescapable political consequences and it should be equally clear that those ideals could hardly be established in terms of contemporary governments without a political upheaval.

This does not mean that Jesus presented a program of revolutionary political procedure. "No one," writes Shailer Matthews¹ "will be apt to

¹ *The Social Teaching of Jesus*, p. 107.

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expect from Jesus an historical study of the conception of the state. He was a student neither of history nor of politics. But there is no lack of facts that go to prove that men since His day have looked to Him as furnishing an ideal of statecraft almost as much as of morals and religion." This, according to Dr. Matthews, is not because Jesus left a "divinely sanctioned form for political association." He did not. It is, rather because men, since His time and with widely varying degrees of wisdom have sought to establish, in governments, "the principles of fraternity and love that underlie the entire social teachings of Jesus."

And Walter Rauschenbush, who staunchly defends the Christian's social gospel, agrees that "Jesus was not a social reformer of the modern type. Sociology and political economy were just as far outside His range of thought as organic chemistry or the geography of America. . . . No comprehension of Jesus is even approximately true which fails to understand that the heart of His heart was religion. But, on the other hand, no man shares his life with God whose religion does not flow out, naturally and without effort, into all relations of his life and reconstructs everything that it touches. Whoever uncouples the religious and the social life has not understood Jesus. Whoever sets any bounds for the reconstructive power of the religious life

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over the social relations and institutions of men, to that extent denies the faith of the Master." ²

If, therefore, Jesus did not present a program of political action, he did present certain ideals of human conduct and human relationship which, if they were ever adopted would revolutionize not only politics but every social institution. Organized Christianity has always been in politics, but not always on behalf of Jesus' moral ideals. Today's church, whatever its blunders and however faulty its comprehension, is in politics for no other purpose and is likely to remain there as long as it is committed to Jesus' ideals, and politics provides one agency by which the progress of those ideals can be advanced or hindered. Moreover, as the commitment to Jesus' teachings is deepened, the certainty of political consequences is increased. It is true enough that the church in politics has been and may be a denial of the good old gospel. But in as far as moral issues are its first concern it should and can be a vindication of it. In any event, a return to that gospel is a hazardous prescription to offer as a cure for the church in politics. What it is hoped will act as a sedative is altogether too likely to turn out to be highly stimulating.

To understand how Jesus' teachings have involved organized Christianity in politics, it is necessary, first of all, to consider the state of the society

² Rauschenbush, *Christianity and the Social Crisis*, pp. 48, 49.

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in which He taught. Political conditions were considerably changed from those with which the eighth century prophets had to deal. Rome had stepped in and taken from Jewish hands practically all of the tasks of government. Rome was arrogant, autocratic and, in the matter of taxation, probably unjust. But there were compensations. Peace was guaranteed, commerce protected and encouraged, law and order zealously maintained. Politics, therefore, did not concern Jesus as it concerned the earlier prophets. There was, in Judea, an undercurrent of unrest, a perennial hope that a Great Deliverer would, one day, appear. But pending his appearance a majority of the people resentfully accepted the inevitable and submitted to the authority of Rome.

Social and religious conditions, however, were in no such ordered state. While Rome kept a sharp imperial eye upon any developments that might threaten its own authority, the governors allowed considerable latitude in the matter of local customs and religious and social practices. The Jewish hierarchy had fattened upon this toleration. The political order represented by Rome was probably neither so offensive nor so unjust as the ecclesiastical order of the Jewish church. Graft had the sanction of religious ritual and thrived, under ecclesiastical administration, in the temple courts. The common people had scant consideration at the hands of the priests. They were denied economic justice when

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they came to trade in the temple bazaars, and religious justice when they sought to worship in the temples themselves. Ecclesiastical offices were very generally knocked down to the highest bidder and the highest bidder, in turn, made it a point to turn his place to profit at every chance.³ Ritual rather than righteousness was at the center of religious interest. Temporal, not moral issues concerned it. The scribes and pharisees worshipped an other-worldly God and—for a price—tolerated all manner of this-worldly immorality. The vested interests in whose presence Jesus preached wore the insignia of religion. But they were no more friendly to His over-turning message and no less harsh in their dealings with Him that if theirs had been a political rather than an ecclesiastical order. It was the last word in indictments when the high priest declared:

“He stirs up the people, teaching them throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee and coming even here.” (Luke 23-5.)

Jesus preached, primarily, to the Jews. His doctrine threatened the Jewish status quo because it emphasized righteousness as of more importance than temporal security. It is only incidental that that status quo was religious rather than governmental. To say that Jesus would have kept out of politics if the state rather than the church had been the issue is to grant Him less courage than Amos or Isaiah

³ Kent, *The Social Teachings of the Prophets and of Jesus*, pp. 182, 183.

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possessed. His message, like that of the earlier prophets, concerned right human relationships. For that very reason it was bound to prove disruptive in any area of life where human relationships were not right. Jesus' own ministry proved that at Jerusalem. His first century disciples proved it at Rome. It has found prophetic proof before the lords of an unjust social order in many centuries since. Today organized Christianity may elect to keep out of politics. But by that election it testifies, not of its faith, but to the belief that politics represents one area of human activity over which the extension of Jesus' ideals of right relationship is either unnecessary or undesirable. Such a position may be expedient. But it is not justified either by the nature of the gospel or by the state of politics.

It is significant, moreover, that Jesus did not hesitate to ally himself with the prophets of Israel or to endorse their message. Most directly He allied Himself with John the Baptist. This, at the very outset, put Him on the side of the disturbers. For in John the spirit and the message of the eighth century prophets were vitally reincarnated. John, so far as his recorded teachings go, ignored completely the ecclesiastical paraphernalia that was the central element in the religion of his day. His message was one of repentance. He had harsh words for the religious professionals. He condemned their exclusiveness, their intolerance, their spiritual conceit. He called

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upon the people to abandon the conventional dressings of religion and become religious. When pressed as to the next steps into the Messianic era that he announced John replied: "He that hath two coats, let him share with him that hath none; and he that hath food let him do likewise." Here was a prophetic forecast of the brotherly social order that Jesus was to proclaim. And here, too, was political dynamite. If such a new social system should come to pass, the old system, obviously, would first have to be destroyed. King Herod knew the unrest that stirred among the people and he proposed, therefore, to take no chances with John. And when John added to the crime of incendiary preaching, a specific attack upon the king for his marriage with Herodias his doom was as certain as though he had actually engineered a revolt.

It would have been safer for Jesus to have kept clear entirely of any entanglements with so radical a preacher. But Jesus did not keep clear. He accepted John as the fore-runner of His own ministry; He carried on John's preaching of the Kingdom of God. He drew some of His disciples from among John's followers. And, however much His own message departed from that of the Baptist, He continued to be his champion.

Thus, too, He admitted His debt to the earlier prophets of Israel. He quoted from their teachings; He preached morality rather than ritual as they

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had preached it; He stood, like the prophets, with those who were poor and oppressed; and like them He linked religion, not only to the individual, but to society and the nation. "If anyone asserts that He abandoned the collective hope and gave His faith solely to religious individualism," declares Walter Rauschenbush,⁴ "he will have to furnish express statements in which Jesus disavows the religious past of His people."

It is against this background and in the light of these prophetic associations that the political implications of Jesus' message must be understood. These implications find their source, not only in the fact that He preached a higher order of relationship between men, but because He revealed a higher conception of man. The eighth century prophets preached righteousness as an expression of the will of Jehovah, the ruler. Jesus preached righteousness as an expression of the desire of God, the Father. To the prophets right relationships rested upon the fear of Jehovah and were enforced by His sure punishments. To Jesus they rested upon the inestimable worth of the individual and were not enforced, but induced by the love of God. The former conception was autocratic. The latter had in it the germ of democracy.

In fact, if there is an adequate apologetic for the political concerns of organized Christianity it must

⁴ *Christianity and the Social Crisis*, pp. 53, 54.

rest back upon the fact of Jesus' revelation of God as Father.

"Nowhere among the sacred scriptures of the world is there to be found even an approximation to this wide and consistent usage among all writers of the sacred scriptures of Christianity of this simple, vital, intimate, feelingful, personal name 'Father' used along with the more abstract term 'God'." (Hume: *The World's Living Religions*, 251.)

In Jesus' teachings the potentate-Jehovah is displaced by this loving Father who seeth his son while still a long way off and runs and falls on his neck and kisses him. It is this Father who so loved the world that He gave His son, and whose concern for man is so intimate that even the hairs of his head are numbered.

"Or what man is there of you," Jesus asked, "who, if his son shall ask him for a loaf will give him a stone; or if he shall ask for a fish will give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"

There is explanation, in that doctrine, for more than one political development. Lord Bryce points out that it is of particular significance for democracy that Jesus taught "the worth of the individual man is enhanced as a being to whom the Creator has

given an immortal soul and who is the object of His continuing care. In that creator's sight the souls of all His human creature are of like worth. . . . The first of these ideas implies spiritual liberty, the obligation to obey God (who speaks directly to the believer's heart) rather than man. It is freedom of conscience. The second implies human equality, in respect not of intellectual or moral capacity but of ultimate worth in the eyes of the Creator, and it points to the equal 'right of all men to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness'." ⁵

Doubtless the most disturbing fact about this revelation was the indiscriminate way in which Jesus seemed to apply it. The Scribes and Pharisees would probably have been quite prepared to accept the idea of God's Fatherhood provided definite enough limits were put on the family circle. Religion in Jesus' day as we have noted, was an exclusive proposition—a characteristic that has proved persistent. The caste system was in effective operation among the dispensers of spiritual benefits. Those who were not important socially or economically were held to be of small importance religiously. The temples were the gathering places of the elite. God would have been highly acceptable as the Father of this family of well-born.

But He was not acceptable as Jesus revealed Him simply because He was too accessible. Anybody

⁵ Bryce, *Modern Democracy*, Vol. I, pp. 88, 89.

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could claim Him. There was no distinction in that. And, as a matter of fact, the folks who did claim Him were the ones who most notoriously were lacking in distinction. Worst of all, Jesus seemed to boast of that fact. He pointed out that His revelation was withheld from the worldly-wise and made plain to children. The elite, looking over His strange assortment of followers, probably agreed. But they would not have admitted that that was any claim to distinction. Quite the contrary.

In fact, Jesus added not only to the unacceptability, but to the potential danger of His message by His choice of associates. He was on suspiciously friendly terms with the proletariat of Jewish society. He hated sin with an unparalleled intensity, but contrary to the customary practices, He revealed an unparalleled love for sinners. He ate with publicans, befriended an adulteress, accepted a tax collector among His disciples, surrounded Himself with ignorant fishermen. He made friends, in short, with precisely the people who were likely to be nursing a grudge against the established order. The common people heard Him gladly. That, of itself, was condemnation enough. The sort of a message that the common people, in any age, are glad to hear is usually not one that is designed to add to the security of those who profit, unjustly, in high places. But for 1900 years since, these same under-privileged children of society, frequently neglected, often betrayed

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by His followers, have continued to look to Him as having eternally established their divine worth in the eyes of God and their divine right before the rulers of men.

All the time, of course, Jesus did preach exclusiveness. Exclusion from this family of God there certainly would be. But not of the accepted sort. He made this decidedly specific. He drew a picture for His hearers of the last Judgment, the time of the final sorting. It was a dramatic picture, and a revolutionary one.

"I was a stranger," He said, "and ye took me in; naked and ye clothed me; I was sick and ye visited me; I was in prison and ye came unto me. . . . Verily I say unto you inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me."

And to the others: "I was hungry and ye did not give me to eat; I was thirsty and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick and in prison and ye visited me not. . . . Verily I say unto you inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of these least ye did it not unto me. And these shall go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous unto eternal life."

Such doctrine was neither pleasant nor safe. A whole religious and economic system had been reared on the assumption that those individuals who were

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important, by man's standards, were also important by the standards of God. And Jesus' standards were decidedly not those of man; at least not of the men who made, maintained and profited by the existing order. If such ideas were to become current, it followed, inevitably, that something would happen not only to the authority but to the security of those men and to their existing order. For if the common herd, who could lay claim to nothing more than a life lived according to righteousness and love, were to be ranked with their "superiors" in the hereafter, it was altogether too likely that they might seek to establish such equality in the here and now.

In short, by preaching the Fatherhood of God Jesus worked a vast change in the common man's idea of his own importance. If God is the kind of a Father that Jesus described, then all men are His children. And once common, ordinary, inconsequential men are awakened to the fact that they are children of God, it is generally not long before they see that, in their status as His children, they are altogether too important to be made to suffer unjustly at the hands of other men whatever their worldly status. That conviction in the hearts of oppressed peoples has made trouble and history for two thousand years. And a significant part of the political progress of mankind since Jesus' time bears witness to the struggle to embody a fuller recogni-

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tion of that divine kinship in the institutions of government.

Nor did Jesus shun the upsetting implications of the things He preached. When He condemned ritual and ceremonial law as the end of religion, He went on and made the condemnation specific in terms of the existing order. He declared that the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath—a doctrine that might have been relatively innocuous and He now proceeded, at once, to put it into practice. He healed on the Sabbath and on that day allowed His disciples to pluck ears of corn as they passed through the fields. He not only got down to cases, but to persons: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye tithe mint and anise and cummin and have left undone the weightier matters of the law, justice and mercy and faith; but these ye ought to have done and not left the other undone. Ye blind guides that strain at the gnat and swallow the camel."

He had many things to say, too, about wealth: "ye cannot serve God and Mammon"; "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things that he possesseth", therefore, "lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven . . ."

And what Jesus had to say about wealth he

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specifically practiced. He practiced it in His own life and in the manner of life that He laid down for His disciples when He sent them out—unsupplied with an expense account—on a preaching mission. He practiced it, too, in the case of the rich young ruler. There is a whole array of currently popular reasons why the rich young ruler should have been, by all means, brought into Jesus' little and somewhat insignificant group. He would have given it prestige, financial backing, and an easy way of approach to the upper classes. And Jesus wanted this young man, not for any of the above reasons, but for himself. There was every worldly argument why Jesus, regardless of what He believed about wealth "in principle", could not afford to be too specific in applying His beliefs on this particular occasion. But He was specific, with the results that any worldly-wise observer would have predicted.

In particular, Jesus was most specific in condemnation of the current temple abuses, and, by that fact, He struck at a whole directorate of interests with which the temple was allied. "The Temple", writes Bishop Francis J. McConnell,⁶ "has been called 'the strongest fortress and the richest bank in Syria.' The Temple had woven a network of political and secular connections centering around itself. There were indeed no capitalists in Jerusalem in our modern technical usage, but there were rich men who sought

⁶ McConnell, *Humanism and Christianity*, pp. 91, 92.

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to use the Temple for their own profit, as did the money changers; and there were priests who themselves loved money. There were politicians both in the Temple and outside, trying to manipulate the Jewish religious system for their own political advantage. Now, Jesus knew well enough that an attack upon the Temple meant shock to the most powerful forces in Jerusalem. A leading financial and industrial authority in this country has recently been calling upon the pulpit to imitate 'the super-cautiousness' of the utterances of Jesus. Jesus made some references to devouring widows' houses, to binding man's shoulders with burdens grievous to be borne, and to whited sepulchres full of dead men's bones, all of which cautious phrases strike at practices of the priesthood in relation to 'business' interests allied with the temple. We are not to suppose that Jesus inveighed against the evils of the foremost Jewish establishment of His time without realizing how far His invective might affect other organizations, but His super-caution did not prevent Him from speaking out nevertheless."

Such a message made so concrete gives the direct challenge, declares Professor Joseph K. Hart⁷ "to all forms of intellectualisms, practicalisms, legalisms, literalisms and militarisms. Plato had said 'the world is made of ideas'; Jesus said, 'build your world out of love and service and sympathy'. Roman militarism

⁷ Hart, *Democracy in Education*, pp. 121-124.

had said, 'buttress your liberties with forts, arsenals and legions of soldiers'; Jesus said, 'the truth alone can make you free'. The Scribes and Pharisees had said, 'Cursed is the man that knows not the law'; Jesus said, 'love is the fulfillment of all law'. In the place of the philosopher, the moralist or the soldier Jesus sets up a little child and says 'of such is the real social order of the future to be made' . . . All the way through the teaching of primitive Christianity the implication is plain that there is quite as much need of the salvation of institutions as of the salvation of individuals."

Now, of course, this line of reasoning has, so far, skirted entirely around the most persistent argument of those who seek to find in the good old gospel a permanent escape from specific and contemporary issues.

The story is told in Mark's gospel of a delegation of Pharisees and Herodians sent by the high priests at Jerusalem to heckle Jesus. It must have been a carefully picked crowd. At any rate, they raised no questions of Jewish law or of temple observance. In these Jesus had proved His knowledge. Rather, they raised a question in which the Roman political authorities were likely to be interested. If Jesus' answer proved unsatisfactory the worries of the high priests, doubtless, would be at an end. For in such a case, Rome, certainly, would take a hand.

When, therefore, the hecklers came to Jesus'

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meeting they said: "Teacher, we know that thou art true, and carest not for any one; for thou regardest not the person of men, but of a truth preachest the way of God: Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar or not. Shall we give or shall we not give."

But Jesus, well aware both of the catch in their question and of the hypocrisy back of it, replied:

"Why make ye trial of me? Bring me a denarius, that I may see it." When it was brought, Jesus continued:

"Whose is this image and superscription"?

And they said unto Him, "Caesar's."

And Jesus said unto them: "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's."

The questioners, according to Mark's report, "marveled greatly at Him". He had given what appeared to be an altogether satisfactory answer. At any rate, there was nothing in it for which Rome could be called in. And yet they "marveled greatly." The disturbers themselves felt a little disturbed. The answer was unexceptionable, on the face of it, but a feeling must have lurked in them that its full significance was not quite plain. And that was the case. To have understood the full meaning of that phrase required more than a momentary contact with this Teacher of strange doctrines: a fact, incidentally, that finds ample proof in the current carelessness with which it is made use of. In fact, the free use

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of this text to prove that Jesus preached a "hands off" gospel proves, chiefly, a lack of familiarity with the real burden of Jesus' message.

It is easy enough to excuse the Pharisees and Herodians in this situation. They were simply mercenaries in the pay of those whose interests Jesus' teachings threatened. But it should be plain that they would never have been sent out on their heckling mission if more were not involved in the message of Jesus than the enemies of the church in politics contend. No one would trouble in this fashion to ensnare the preacher of a faith as safe and innocuous as that to which we are told today, the church must be confined. Somebody's vested interests were endangered by the things that Jesus said. Only that fact adequately explains the effort of the authorities to "get something on" Him. Similar tactics have been used with frequency during the last nineteen centuries. They have been frequently used against "radical" preachers in the United States since the World War. They may prove many things but only one thing with certainty: that the stability of some element in the established order is thought to be jeopardized. And that, precisely, was the case with the radical preaching of Jesus. Safety decreed that He be got rid of.

If Jesus, on this occasion, advised His hecklers to render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's His entire

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ministry made it plain to all men how limited were the things of Caesar in contrast to those of God. No teacher in human history ever cut in more ruthlessly on the things that the Caesars claimed; or added, so significantly, to the things of God.

"I am come", Jesus said, "that ye may have life and that ye may have it more abundantly." And whether He was upbraiding the Scribes and Pharisees or driving the money changers out of the temple or expounding the upsetting principles of the Sermon on the Mount He clearly included every individual act and every social situation that affected that abundant life as within God's—not Caesar's—sphere of influence. He condemned hypocrisy, greed, injustice, poverty, hatred in terms of the social groups and the social institutions that perpetuated those qualities. He claimed for God the right to establish, in place of those qualities, the new ideal of love and brotherliness, long-suffering, sacrifice and service. He laid it upon His followers to give themselves, without stint, to the task of supplanting the old order of man with the new order of God. That He believed such a task could be accomplished, in any age, without conflict with the Caesars is inconceivable. He knew them too well.

In fact, it is impossible to discover any area of life from which Jesus excluded God and left Caesar unquestionably supreme. This is the certain consequence of His conception of life itself. In any area

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of man's personal or social relationships it was inevitable that situations and institutions could and certainly would develop which were subversive of that abundant order which He proclaimed. When they did develop, then the remedying of such situations, by transformation or destruction, became an inescapable obligation upon His followers. Thus, even in the political realm, there remained for Caesar only a conditional authority; an authority that continued unquestioned so long as it permitted the growth of the Christ-life in individuals and society and terminated, for Christians, when it did not. And Jesus was so concrete about this that in the end the Caesars, who happened to be priests instead of politicians, put Him to death.

Bishop McConnell ⁸ declares that for many years as a reader of the Gospels he found great difficulty accounting for the historical causes that brought about Jesus' death. It was a common assumption, thirty years ago, that Jesus was concerned, primarily, about the conversion of individuals and quite willing to let the transformation of society take its own slow and undisturbing course. "But", he writes, "the reflection kept recurring to me that if Jesus was primarily laboring for the conversion of individuals as individuals he need not have come to a violent death at all. If the people in Galilee and Jerusalem were not willing to listen to Him, all he had to do

⁸ McConnell, *Humanism and Christianity*, pp. 82 ff.

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was to pass over into the countries beyond Jewry, anticipating by ten or fifteen years the work of Paul, who when the Jews refused to hear him carried the Gospel to the Gentiles out over the Roman Empire . . . There is nothing in the Gospel narrative to imply that, if Jesus had been willing to follow the plan of preaching the Gospel to individuals as such, he might not have had a ministry of fifty years with no more hardship than we of a later day encounter in so preaching the Gospel . . . Teachers and preachers of abstract truth were common enough in the day of Jesus. We seldom hear about them simply because their teachings made little practical difference. Jesus came under fire not because His enemies misunderstood Him, but because they understood Him."

And the church today in politics or in industry or in the work of social reformation is condemned because it, too, is understood. There are those, unquestionably, whose belief that the church should refrain from "meddling" is not a cloak to cover practices which the meddling might expose. But there are others whose very alarm at the modern spectacle of religion getting down to cases is cause for suspicion. Our social and political order is not yet Christian enough to be able to operate comfortably under the too close scrutiny of those who are determined to establish the supremacy of Jesus' way of life.

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But it is, I think, apparent that when the church today goes into politics—that is, accepts politics as one among many agencies whereby a more abundant life may be helped or hindered—it takes its apologetic from the tradition not of the priests, but of Jesus and the eighth century prophets. The most cursory study of that tradition will indicate that for such a step, in the interests of such an ideal, there is ample and adequate precedent. Political parsons can sing with Billy Sunday of “the old time religion that is good enough for me”. Only they insist that the religion referred to be old enough and significantly enough attested to partake of the dynamic and recreating quality that characterized the religion of Jesus, and that their good old gospel be safe only where men and conditions are Christian and upsetting wherever they are not.

Chapter Five

A New World Order

CHRISTIANITY has had in it the seeds of political disturbance not only because of the gospel—the good old gospel—that Jesus preached, but also because of the obligations He laid upon His followers to do something about it. The Christian church, through the centuries, has been active concerning many matters, some moral, others not, but it has always been active. Its concerns have sometimes been selfish and worldly, but it has always been concerned. In fact, neither Christians nor the Christian church have ever been entirely content to let well enough alone. They have come down through history actively concerned about the beliefs, the practices and the institutions of those who were not of a like religious mind with them.

Now this zealous interest in other people's business is not due to any special perversities in Christians themselves. It is due, rather, to certain specific teachings of Jesus which Christians, from Pentecost to the present, have always regarded as an essential part of His plan for them. Whenever righteousness

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is an issue Christians cannot avoid meddling without avoiding Jesus.

For Jesus laid it upon His followers to give His gospel embodiment. That purpose is central to His conception of the Kingdom of Heaven which occupied so large a place in His teaching. In more than one hundred passages in the gospels Jesus makes reference to the Kingdom of Heaven and although He never precisely defined the expression, it is at least apparent that He held it to have a more than personal and individualistic meaning. His statement in Luke, "the kingdom of God is within you" has been almost as badly used as the now widely popular text, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's." This one phrase, "the Kingdom of God is within you," is more accurately translated "in the midst of you," and it is the only saying of Jesus, according to Shailer Matthews, "that in any way lends support to the view that He thought of the kingdom as a subjective state of the individual and even that can hardly be used as a basis upon which to build an individualistic system of self-culture."¹

In fact, if Jesus did not mean this teaching to have practical meaning for social institutions He would probably have used a different terminology. The Jewish people were waiting for just such a declaration of a new Kingdom. They were submissive to the authority of Rome, but by no means

¹ Shailer Matthews, *The Social Teaching of Jesus*, p. 46.

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content with it. Some of them advocated violence, some prayed for the miraculous intervention of God but all agreed that there would be, one day, a new social order, a Jewish state, freed from Rome, purged of injustice and corruption, and ruled over by Messiah, as God's representative. Citizenship would be open only to Jews; and all other peoples subject to Jewish domination. Of this new and theocratic Empire Jerusalem was to be the capitol.

To the Jews of Jesus' day, therefore, the Kingdom of God was no abstract idea. It had definite political meaning. It was the slogan, of all others, most likely to arouse the masses. It was this that accounted, in considerable measure, for the excitement created by the preaching of John the Baptist. The Jews were so familiar with the preachers of strange doctrine and with prophets in general that this unknown desert evangelist would probably never have stirred them save for the fact that he came, saying "repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." But because of that last phrase there "went out unto him Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region round about the Jordan."

And when Jesus used this expression He undoubtedly knew what the Jews were thinking about. He was well aware that the kingdom, to them, was no mere state of internal bliss; but, on the contrary, an objective social order fashioned, with God's help, out of the materials of this world and inhabited by

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this world's human creatures. It was not necessary, therefore, for Him to define the term precisely. His hearers took it for granted that He referred to a society in the here and now. And that, evidently, is what He did mean. If He had meant anything else He could easily have said so and thus avoided much of the hostility that was aroused against Him and that led, in the end, to His crucifixion.

Similarly, if Jesus had made it plain that He had no objective social order in mind, He would have spared His followers much suffering and many errors as well as many glorious triumphs. For the history of the Christian church reflects the influence of this idea on almost every page. The reflection is not always clear or pleasant, but it is unavoidable. Christians have never been able, for long, to get away from the conviction that what they believed, as individuals, must find some manner of social incorporation. The exact manner of both the belief and the incorporation has varied greatly with the times. But both elements have always, in some measure, been present. The church has always been concerned both for the state of man and for the state of society. This was true when the first century Christians condemned the social and political paganisms of Rome and withdrew into a society of their own. It was true through the Middle Ages when the church, dominated by temporal ambition, devoted itself zealously and with considerable suc-

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cess to the task of bringing the world under the authority of an ecclesiastical state. It was true, also, in the post-Reformation period, as a short study of the Puritan movement will indicate. And in the current outcry against the church in politics there is sufficient evidence that the same thing is true today. Organized Christianity which has affected society in various ways and for good and ill, has, none-the-less, never been separate from it. The church has frequently been wrong. But it has never, for long, been aloof.

Now Jesus not only preached the Kingdom of God as an objective order of society, but He made clear the lines along which that society must be established. His specifications required social institutions founded upon justice and righteousness and dominated, in their operation, by love, to the end that society could provide to all men that abundant life which God, the Father, desired them to have. And it is important to note that whenever the church in politics has followed Jesus' plans it has been a society-transforming power; and whenever it has sought to draw up other specifications, designed to serve its own temporal rather than Jesus' moral purposes, its leadership has been discredited and its good influence weakened.

Jesus' plans for an ideal social order were no more orthodox in Rome than they are today in America, and no more designed to win popular ap-

proval. Popular opinion had its mind already pretty well made up as to the ways and means for ushering in the Kingdom of God, and as to what would happen once it was ushered in. It never occurred to the average Jewish patriot that their ways might not be God's way. It did, however, occur to Jesus. And the fact that He was so concrete and emphatic about it, aroused a tide of resentment against Him. He found out how costly it sometimes is to run counter to the assumptions of contemporary patriotism.

For one thing, it was generally agreed that the Kingdom of the Jews would come by violence and by bloodshed. The logic of this conclusion was simple enough. In fact, it has a decidedly modern ring. The Roman world was founded on force. It followed, obviously, that only force could change it. That is, it followed obviously in the minds of the patriotic man in the street and of the temple authorities. It did not follow, however, in the mind of Jesus. At the very outset of His ministry He faced this issue. With the devil as guide, He went into a high mountain below which the kingdoms of the earth were spread out, and there the devil offered Him a temporal kingdom in exchange for His moral order. The sight must have been an inspiring one particularly to a young Jew with the dreams of youth and of His people in His heart. And the bargain that the devil proposed must have been alluring. Otherwise it would hardly be classed as a tempta-

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tion. But Jesus refused to make the trade. He refused to barter His own ideals of the Kingdom for a devil-supported opportunity to realize the nationalistic hopes of His people. He refused to accept the devil's program even though the future of His own nation was involved. Such a decision seems to come within the scope of some very recent definitions of treason.

And it does not help matters much, from the viewpoint of the hundred-percenter, that Jesus offered an alternative to the generally accepted method of violence and bloodshed. His alternative was altogether too idealistic. No sound patriot could consider it. He proposed that the Kingdom be founded upon love, a love guaranteed by a Father-God and expressed in the brotherliness among men. He proposed that men take the risks of love and brotherliness. He knew, doubtless, how emphatically they would refuse. In such a scheme there was no place for glory, at least not for glory of the accepted band-playing, banner-waving sort. Moreover such a doctrine was a counsel of defeat; it was an opiate for the people. The world did its business with military backing. The Jews, clearly, would have to do business in the same way. No hundred per cent Jew would talk about love to the tune of Rome's marching legions. Jesus, none-the-less, preached his conviction and accepted, in return, the condemnation of the political realists. And He left to His followers

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the embarrassing task of determining just how far they would coöperate with the state when the state employed the tactics that Jesus renounced.

I do not mean that there has often been a great deal of difficulty on that point. Christians have identified the way of God with the way of the state almost as fully as the ancient Jews. But the embarrassment, never-the-less, has been inherent in Jesus' teachings. And it may be one sign of a return to the "good old gospel" that that issue is coming in for such intensive consideration at the present time. The moral principles involved are becoming of greater value to some people than the temporal security which the compromising of those principles might purchase. But now, as twenty centuries ago, the fate of one who renounces the devil's practices of violence and hate and proposes righteousness, justice and brotherly love as the alternative, is likely to lead to a cross, particularly at times when the state has staked its future on the success of the violence-hate policy.

Now Jesus not only proposed a new and altogether unacceptable method for establishing the Kingdom, but He outlined its boundaries in an altogether too inclusive manner. Jewish patriotism had a "My country, right or wrong" basis. The ideal state of which they dreamed was to be one hundred per cent Jewish. They were God's chosen people.

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There were no others. If God established a Kingdom, therefore, it would have to be Jewish. To believe anything else was disloyal and subversive.

But Jesus came believing something else. He accepted His obligations as a believing Jew, but He never accepted the narrow nationalism that those obligations were supposed to involve. When He met the Roman centurion, He violated one of the chief tenets of the current patriotism by befriending Him. Then to add to the affront, He declared that, among all the Jews, He had not found such great faith. And He forthwith made room in His Kingdom for many out of the East and the West beyond the Jewish pale. At Nazareth he aroused the anger of His hearers by pointing out that Elijah had found refuge with a heathen Phoenician and that Elisha had healed only a Syrian leper. When, one day, He healed ten lepers He noted the fact that the only one who returned to thank Him was a foreigner. And for a model of what citizenship in His Kingdom involved, Jesus selected a despised and alien Samaritan. With patriotic feelings what they were, it was just about as advisable to say good things to a Jewish audience about a Samaritan as it would have been, a decade or so ago, to extol the virtues of the Germans to an audience of Americans. But it was obvious that citizenship in the Kingdom which Jesus had in view would have neither a national nor

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a racial basis, but was open to anyone of whatever status or birth who could qualify by a righteous manner of life. In Christ, said Paul, "there is neither Jew nor Greek."

That principle, too, has caused its share of embarrassment among Christians. Every generation has had its "publicans and sinners"—Negroes or Japanese or Mexicans—with whom society has held it to be inexpedient to have social intercourse. And Christians have not had too comfortable a time of it trying to accept Jesus' inclusive ideal without doing too great violence to the current social taboos. As a matter of fact, of course, the discomfort has not generally been serious. We have been spared that by our facility in the practice of selective Christianity. But the issue, none-the-less, has always been inherent in Jesus' teaching and there may be one further indication of a return to the upsetting complications of the good old gospel in the fact that it is no longer so easy to ignore it.

It seems clear, therefore, that the gospel which Jesus preached not only called men to a new manner of life, but called upon them to incorporate that life in the institutions of society. It was Jesus' conviction, according to Shailer Matthews,² "that an ideal society is not beyond human attainment, but is the natural possibility for man's social capacities and

² Shailer Matthews, *The Social Teaching of Jesus*, p. 77.

powers." Christians have held that conviction—have accepted it, in fact, as an obligation—from the first century to the twentieth. It has led them, as we shall see, into all manner of unchristian practices. But it has never been surrendered. The church has never ceased to believe in a new Heaven nor ceased, altogether, to strive for a new Earth. It is largely for this reason that Christians have never been entirely content to "mind their own business;" and that the church has never, at any stage in its history, been wholly reconciled to the social and political status quo.

But the political menace involved in Jesus' teaching of the Kingdom would not have been so serious if His gospel had been less contagious and its influence more easily localized. Palestine, after all, was a rather small and insignificant corner of a very extensive Empire. Almost anything could happen there without endangering Rome. The Jews might raise up prophets to their hearts' content and no one in the Imperial household be particularly disturbed. Jewish restlessness was a purely local matter and could be checked in the customary manner with a few summary executions.

But the restlessness occasioned by Jesus' preaching was not stopped that way. His followers did not forget. On the contrary they turned out to be propagandists—of the sort that have since disturbed the

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officials of more than one Department of Justice. And their enthusiasm was peculiar. Instead of dying with their leader it was, in some remarkable manner, constantly recharged.

This fact, doubtless, might not have been particularly remarkable if the zeal of the Christians had been ingrown and self-centered. Having had so great a vision of perfection they might with greater safety have put in their time perfecting themselves. They believed that the establishment of Christ's Kingdom was imminent, and if caution had ruled their preparation for that event, they would have devoted themselves to all manner of spiritual grooming. But caution was not an early Christian virtue. Thus these early converts set about it with almost feverish earnestness to acquaint everyone within reach with the "good news", and to prepare as many as would believe for citizenship in the new order. The Christians became dangerous because they made their gospel epidemic. Against it Rome had no effective quarantine.

And Christianity, ever since the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, has remained a missionary faith. Zealous Christians, with sometimes more zeal than scruples, have encompassed the earth to make one proselyte. Devout believers have unremittingly prayed and labored, not only for the establishment of the Kingdom of God, but for its extension. And the plans they laid down have always been notably

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comprehensive. They accepted no boundaries in the second century. They accept none in the twentieth.

"Jesus shall reign where'er the sun,
Does his successive journeys run;
His Kingdom spread from shore to shore,
Till kings shall wax and wane no more."

It is true, of course, that these inclusive plans required a high order of courage and consecration for their execution, and reflected also the human frailties of the men who conceived them. Christian conquest, an expression still common in missionary addresses, has been more than mere rhetoric in the history of the faith. Martin of Tours and King Clovis set certain precedents for coercive conversion which were not disestablished for many centuries. Explorers were missionaries and the men at arms who journeyed with them were no less indispensable to establish the claims of a heavenly than of an earthly sovereign. And the same methods generally were used to establish both.

Latterly these methods have been generally abandoned. Their abandonment has at least kept pace with the gradual renunciation of force as the chief agent and sole guarantor of the political and economic expansion of the West. But meanwhile, the long drama of missionary journeying and conquest from St. Paul, St. Patrick and Boniface down to William Carey, Adoniram Judson and David Liv-

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ingstone, has remained perhaps the most cherished, certainly the most frequently recounted tradition of the Christian church.

The fact that Christianity is and always has been a missionary faith explains why neither Rome nor any subsequent power has been able to localize it. It helps to explain, too, why Christians so frequently have proved to be an upsetting element in an unchristian established order. Rome, evidently, had no particular interest in the things that Jesus said as He walked along the roads of Galilee. The authorities were not especially alarmed, even though they knew that many of His teachings were subversive of the Roman order. The Jews believed that the new kingdom which he talked about was expected to supersede that of Rome. But there is no record that, even then, the authorities called out the Roman guard. They were indifferent, partly because, after the fashion of Hyde Park, they preferred to tolerate agitators rather than to martyr them; and partly because of their confidence that anything which Jesus, or any other Jewish preacher, would have to say could never have more than a local significance. Rome, with ease, could see to that.

Trouble began with the missionaries. The new religion, by its preaching, spread out of Palestine into the Gentile world. Now there is no evidence that the Gentile world desired to be Christianized. It seemed to be getting along, fairly well, with its

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own religions. To a Roman observer there was no good reason why the Christians should interfere with the religious status quo in Asia Minor. But they did interfere. And by their interfering they made trouble for Rome. They have been interfering ever since, and the result of their interference has almost always been a certain measure of trouble for the existing order when that existing order rested on dubious practices.

This fact has long been recognized. When, in 1789, William Carey announced his plan to go to India as a missionary, the wrath of India's British traders was kindled against him. The English East India Company, on behalf of all exploitive interests, raised a mighty hue and cry. The Directors were hastily assembled and resolved that:

"The sending out of missionaries into our Eastern possessions is the maddest, most extravagant, most costly, most indefensible project which has ever been suggested by a moon-struck fanatic. Such a scheme is pernicious, imprudent, useless, harmful, dangerous, profitless, fantastic. It strikes against all reason and sound policy. It brings the peace and safety of our possessions into peril."

Early in 1807, Robert Morrison, an English youth in his early twenties, was appointed by the London Missionary Society to open work in China. The sentiment of the traders had not softened. They knew that the missionaries, soon or late,

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would spoil the non-white world as the white man's Happy Hunting Ground. So every effort was made to block him. The East India Company refused to sell passage on its ships to him, or to any other missionaries. Young Morrison, who later translated the entire Bible into Chinese, was finally obliged to go to his field by way of the United States and an American vessel.)

The fears of these early traders have been justified. The missionary's gospel has made the nationals of many lands dissatisfied with their subservient position and less submissive to economic exploitation, and the old order in Asia is passing. Lord Inchcape, whose shipping crowds the seas of the East, has fixed the blame for China's unrest upon the agents of Christianity. His conclusions, with little doubt, find daily endorsement at the long bars of all the foreign clubs from Bombay to Tokio. According to Rodney Gilbert, popular British interpreter of the same point of view, "the part which missions have played in rearing vicious enemies against our well-being in China and the future of our trade in the East is too big and too conspicuous to be ignored". To Rodney Gilbert and to Lord Inchcape, of course, "our well being" is identified with and China's well-being made incidental to "our trade". With that conviction the missionary, representative of a faith that could not let well enough alone, has interfered. And his interference has been

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bad for business, wherever business has been unfair or whenever, for its success, it required military force and foreign political domination.

The results of the missionary's interference are political as well as economic. I once heard a representative of the military community in Manila remark, at the end of a tirade against the Filipino Independence movement, that "the curse of the islands is the Christian population. Without the Christians there wouldn't be any talk about independence". A Japanese official in Korea, when I asked him about the influence of Christianity upon the Korean people declared, with something less than the customary diplomatic circuitousness:

"We are very happy to have the missionaries come here. We cannot deny that they do a great deal of good for the Korean people. But we are obliged to believe that their Christian teachings, misunderstood perhaps, were responsible for the unfortunate Korean independence movement in 1919."

And it is impossible to know something about the missionary and the gospel that he seeks to spread without recognizing the truth in these accusations. The missionary could not have prevented these results from his work without abandoning his gospel. That gospel, as we have seen, discloses a new personality at the heart of the universe. To conceive of God the Father, as Jesus did, is to believe, with Him, in the inestimable worth of every individual.

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To accept Jesus' teaching of the Kingdom of God is to assume an obligation to establish, throughout the world, the kind of social and economic relationships that will help to provide for the development of that inestimable human value in all men. This ideal has proved to be as revolutionary in the lands where the missionary works as it is fundamental in Christianity.

In the face of oppression, the missionary, with the sanction of such a gospel, stirs up discontent by preaching and acting on the assumption that the natives have "rights". In the face of economic and social slavery he dares to deal with the natives as though they were fit to be free. The hospitals and schools and churches that he builds are an expression of the firmness of his faith in the divine worth and destiny of the people among whom he works, and of his conviction that that destiny should be given some chance for realization this side of the hereafter.

The same convictions, today, are finding expression in situations nearer home. Jesus' plans for the Kingdom are finding some measure of concrete interpretation in terms of our modern life. Those concrete interpretations have involved the churches in politics, led some of them to concern themselves about industrial conditions, and brought about at least a partial awakening to our contemporary racial injustices. Back of these developing activities is

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a growing commitment to Jesus' plans for a Kingdom of Heaven, and a growing conviction that that Kingdom, however heaven-born in its ideals, must be of earthly establishment and that its institutions and practices must express those ideals of human worth that Jesus proclaimed.

There is, therefore, very little in the "good old gospel" to justify the development of a philosophy of political detachment for the church. In fact, as we shall see, it has never had such a philosophy. It has been involved in politics from motives of various sorts. But it has always been involved. The political tactics of Christians—when their interests were temporal rather than moral—have frequently been none too Christian. But the church, nonetheless, has never surrendered entirely its conviction that Jesus, who preached a new ideal of the relationship between man and his God and a new attitude between man and his fellow-man, laid upon His followers the obligation to embody those ideals in a definite, man-inhabited society in the here and now. The fact that the church, in seeking to accomplish that task, has frequently erred, does not relieve it from the obligation. And the church is likely to remain in politics until that obligation is abandoned or politics ceases to provide one agency whereby the building of such a social order may be delayed or speeded.

Chapter Six

Political Parsons of the Second Century

LORD BRYCE declares that religion is "the strongest force by which governments have been affected." He does not say the most beneficial force, although he points out that forms of government would have mattered little "had Christianity been put in practice." That Christianity was not put in practice is obvious. It is just as obvious that the church, the organized agent of the faith, early sold its spiritual birth-right for a mess of temporal pottage and thereafter fell victim to about the same diseases that afflicted agencies laying claim to no divine immunities. But in the comparatively few years before those afflictions came upon it, Christianity gave to the world a demonstration of moral power that since has never been surpassed.

Had a prophet of political revolution dropped into the Roman Empire in the second century, A.D., his official reception would have been no less hostile and his treatment, doubtless, somewhat more summary than that which is officially accorded to prophets in more modern times. If, however, this

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particular reformer, moving with unprophetic caution, had quietly cast about him for possible allies he would almost certainly have found his way into the Christian Church. The atmosphere, there, would have been to his liking. If he had failed to convert the Christians to his disruptive schemes the Christians, like as not, would have converted him to their no less disruptive gospel. Prophets, among the Christians, were not without honor.

In fact, of all the heterogeneous elements that made up the Roman Empire, the Christian Church, alone, had not sold out to Cæsar. It, alone, practiced an independence of thought and action and cared, for conviction's sake, to defy the established order. It could afford to oppose Cæsar because, in the Christian's currency, there was nothing that Cæsar could give or take away. It had no temporal, but only moral and spiritual ambitions to serve. And yet, as our hypothetical prophet would have found, the church of the second century was in politics.

To understand this it is necessary to understand something of the state of the Empire and something of the nature of the church. Rome, when Christianity invaded it, was a rich man's paradise. In his service the masses of the people were incessantly employed. "In their dress, their table, their houses, and their furniture, the favorites of fortune united every refinement of convenience, of elegance, of splendor, whatever could soothe their pride or

gratify their sensuality.”¹ Night life flourished extensively. Petronius provides us with the account of a feast that included a complex assortment of courses and of dishes that defied describing, music, dancing, tight-rope walking, juggling and—for quiet interludes—dramatic recitations of the poems of Homer. Having torn down its barns and built greater, Rome took its ease; ate, drank and was merry.

Moreover, being rich and powerful, Rome reckoned that it was eternal. The blessings of the gods, Rome reasoned, had hardly been poured out for naught. The abundance of the things that Rome possessed was accepted as adequate apologetic for the nature of the things that Romans did. It was not difficult, in the midst of such opulence and power, to identify the future of the state with the will of the gods.

And yet, by the second century, A.D., things had begun to go awry. There were signs of disintegration in the Imperial fabric. A perennial crop of pretenders kept the Empire in civil turmoil. Disastrous invasions from across the Rhine and the Euphrates taxed the military to the limit. Provincial mismanagement was wide-spread. The times, which were rife with unrest, were growing ripe for rebellion.

In Rome, the authorities, charged to see to it, at all costs, that prosperity continued unabated,

¹ Gibbon, *Roman Empire*, Vol. I.

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were decidedly nervous. Word went out to the local magistrates throughout the Empire to stamp out, without restraint, the faintest show of disaffection. Public assemblies, for whatever purpose, were forbidden. When Pliny wrote to Trajan from his provincial post to seek an imperial permit for the organization of a fire department at Nicomedia, Trajan replied that he would be happy to provide more modern equipment but that he could not run the risk of allowing the men to gather for meetings. The Empire's crowds, thus, were kept moving. If they stopped they might hatch subversive plots against the established order.

Conditions had grown no better when, toward the end of the third century, Diocletian became Emperor. Diocletian, looking upon a restless Empire in 285, very much as Mussolini must have looked upon a restless Italy in 1926, decided, like Mussolini, that the times required a Dictator. With dictatorial forthrightness he discarded the last vestiges of Republican practices; spread over the Empire a most up-to-date system of political espionage; declared that he was the state's supreme judge and that his methods were those of suppression and persecution. Having gone so far, he went the rest of the way and took to himself the title of "Lord and God" and required, from his subjects, the homage due divinity. If despotism could preserve

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the status quo, then Diocletian proposed to preserve it.

Now, if these troubles were not altogether due to Christianity and these policies altogether prompted by its spread it was, none-the-less, the Christian church that most seriously threatened the success of such a dictatorship and that was destined to suffer most severely in the process of its establishment. This was not because of any settled opposition on the part of the church to despotism as a form of government. Forms of government had not, as yet, become a matter of ecclesiastical concern. It was rather because of certain characteristics in the organization of the church and certain beliefs and practices in the life of its members.

The early Christians were marked by one quality that set them apart from the society of those first centuries and, for that matter, would have set them apart from any later society. They possessed a moral and spiritual single-mindedness. They were both other-worldly and anti-worldly. In either case they were "queer". It followed, as it usually does, that they were held to be anti-social. And for this they were destined to pay the usual penalties.

It was other-worldliness that first characterized the Christians in the Roman Empire. Their thought was turned, by their apocalyptic beliefs, from mundane matters to a consideration of the necessary preparations for the triumphant return of Christ.

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Paul, himself, looked confidently toward that event. His converts, apparently, were confident to the point of fanaticism for the Apostle was obliged to remonstrate with those who went so far as to dispose of their worldly possessions and give themselves up to a policy of prayerful waiting. But with such a conviction it was not strange that the temporal house was somewhat neglected since so much needed to be done to put the spiritual house in shape, and that the Christians, insofar as they were able, ignored the world and shunned its works.

In the midst of the worldliness of Rome, therefore, the Christians were marked men. Where so much was irresponsible gayety, their countenance was gloomy and their bearing austere. They had little traffic with the common business and none whatever with the common pleasures of life. When they spoke it was, like as not, to refer to the universal doom that they believed to be pending. Pliny remarked that "whatever may be the principle of their conduct, their inflexible obstinacy appeared deserving of punishment." In short, they were too different to be popular and, worse than that, they managed, in an age that prized comfort above everything else, to make folks decidedly uncomfortable. Just how much hostility was stored up against them by this passive resistance to the social order is apparent from the ease with which Nero shifted to the Christians the blame for the burning of Rome. In

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the modern sense they were not in politics. In fact, they were as far out as it would be possible to get. And yet the very persistence of their non-coöperation made them a political force so important that they were regarded, by Emperor and people, as an agency that, for its preservation, the state was obliged to destroy.

After Paul's death, however, and with the passing of the years the hope for Christ's immediate return began somewhat to wane. The apocalyptic note was less in the ascendancy in the thought of the Church. The Christians were not so insistently impelled to ignore the world. But, insofar as they were able and with just as much determination as ever, they continued to shun its works. When they began, at last, to turn from the anticipation of Christ's return to the world to a consideration of their adjustment in it they saw—and Rome soon saw with them—at how many points their manner of life conflicted with the manner of life about them. If, therefore, they were less other-worldly, they became more anti-worldly. When in Rome Christians did, not as the Romans, but as they believed Christians should do. And the hostility toward them waxed.

The Christianity of this period, according to Dr. Charles A. Ellwood² was "not so much a mere 're-

² *Reconstruction of Religion*, p. 79.

Prof. Ellwood quotes from an article in the *American Journal of Theology* in which Prof. C. W. Votaw of the University of Chicago summarizes the socially idealistic aspects of primitive Christianity. These twenty-five points are important here because every one of them, item by item,

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form' movement in the external social order as a movement directed at a 'revolution in culture', a complete change in the 'mores'. From the first it was so recognized and fought by the champions and defenders of the older order in which it originated."

For one thing, the Christians refused to be a part

stands at variance with the accepted thought and practice in the Roman world. The summary is as follows:

1. Its comprehensive and supreme principle was love of man toward man—brotherliness in feeling, action and thought.
2. It inculcated the sacrifice of self for the good of others.
3. It made the common welfare the chief aim of life.
4. It sought to establish consideration and justice in the social relations of men.
5. It aimed to diminish the valuation and to check the pursuit of material things.
6. It sought to control and suppress sex immorality.
7. It elevated the marriage ideal and practice.
8. It forbade envy and strife, fraud and theft, drunkenness and reveling.
9. It censured self-complacency, arrogance, and selfishness in the better class.
10. It condemned pride, ostentation and hypocrisy.
11. It placed the social duties above the ritual duties, right conduct and character above worship and ordinance.
12. It interpreted the will of God in the direction of reasonable living.
13. It made the individual free, autonomous, responsible.
14. It rebuked legalism in law and in social administration.
15. It sought to prevent the domination of the weak by the strong.
16. It opposed the use of force to accomplish social ends.
17. It undertook to replace the law and practice of retribution, i.e., revenge, retaliation, by the principle of returning good for evil and overcoming evil with good.
18. It created so high and free a conception of the right social relations as to disaffect the Christians toward the Roman Government.
19. It developed local groups of persons throughout the Empire bound together religiously and socially in close fellowship.
20. It unified Orientals and Occidentals in a real brotherhood, surmounting the barriers of race antipathy and national alignment.
21. It brought together on a common plane, the rich and the poor, the educated and the ignorant, the prominent and the obscure, the master and the slave.
22. It welded new social bonds, detaching people from previous groups and associations and uniting them on a higher basis.
23. It founded a solid, permanent social organization within the Roman Empire that was to survive the latter's fall.
24. It made life idealistic, hopeful, joyful, and courageous.
25. It assured men of eternal welfare and a perfect social order in an imminent new age.

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of the current social life. Gladiatorial shows were the most popular high-class amusement. They represented vested interests of great importance. But the church forbade its members to attend them and, what was worse, condemned them as evil. In a time when morals were loose and the family relationship degraded, the Christians set up a high moral code, practiced it themselves and, not too gently, prescribed it for society. In short, in the social life of Rome, the Christians were unassimilated aliens, preaching alien and unwelcome doctrines.

But more serious than this, the Christians rejected the national religion. They refused to acknowledge, by even so much as a nod toward the Emperor's shrine, the god-head of Caesar. They boldly proclaimed, in language that was not diplomatically chosen, the unique divinity of Christ and the universal and all-powerful character of the God that Christ revealed; a God destined to destroy Rome's pretenders to divinity. And such teaching, in Rome, was intolerable. For Rome's gods had been given the credit for Rome's greatness. Their fate and the fate of the state were one. This new God was a threat to both. To preach Him, in Rome, was more than a religious practice. It was, in official eyes, a political peril of the first order.

Just what that peril involved is indicated by the tragic story of the Theban Legion. In 268 a peasants' war broke out in Gaul. The peasants, oppressed

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beyond measure, rose against their landlords, burned their houses, forced them to flee. Maximian, co-emperor with Diocletian, took the field with an army to put down the revolution. With his troops was the Theban Legion, made up of Christians. Before the battle, the Emperor called on his army to offer prayers to the gods of Rome for victory. The Theban Legion refused to join in the ceremony. Whereupon, the Emperor ordered that it be decimated. His orders being fulfilled he demanded that the remainder pray as he directed. Again they refused. Again the legion was decimated—and so on until it was entirely wiped out. Rome had dealt with its Conscientious Objectors.

Now passive resistance of this sort might, conceivably, have been dealt with in this fashion had the Christians, themselves, been less zealous. But though they offered no resistance when persecution came, they were not content to remain passive in order to prevent its coming. It is a remarkable fact that Rome was notably tolerant toward all faiths save the Christian. This was due, not altogether to the subversive doctrines in which the Christians believed, but because they were strangely on fire to spread their subversive teachings. It seemed to follow that when a man became a Christian he became, as part of the same process, a missionary. And a Christian missionary in the Roman Empire was, by the very nature of the things which he was impelled

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to preach, an enemy of the state. He was involved in politics because he was in the business of persuading as many individuals as possible to surrender Rome as their first allegiance and to accept, in its place, a first allegiance to doctrines with which Rome was bound to be in conflict.

The political danger inherent in this missionary zeal was greatly enhanced by the manner in which Christianity was organized. If Christians were alien to Rome, then the church seemed admirably designed to prevent their assimilation. If their doctrines were subversive, it was the church that nurtured their dangerous thoughts, maintained their moral enthusiasm, and sent them out aflame to the conquest of paganism.

In fact, the unique importance of the church to the life of the individual Christian in the early as in succeeding centuries can hardly be overstated. That the church was in politics in Rome and has been in politics ever since is due, in considerable measure, to the place it has occupied in the thought and the purposes of Christians. The importance of that place was first determined soon after Pentecost. The earliest followers of Christ, convinced of His resurrection, were likewise certain that He would soon return and establish the Messianic Kingdom of which He had spoken. In the intervening period, therefore, they gave themselves to two tasks: to the conversion of as many as possible of their fellows

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to a belief in Christ's Messiahship and to their own preparation for His second coming. The church, thus, provided both the first foundations for a Divine State of Christ's own founding and the agency whereby those foundations might be extended.

And to the believer of the second century, the church was an institution not human, but divine, "created before the sun and moon", and for whose sake "the world was framed." It was not so much an aggregate of the faithful as the Kingdom of Heaven in earthly miniature. Its converts were regarded as "new creatures". With conversion they became citizens, not of Rome but of another, a Heavenly Kingdom. Their citizenship was not of mundane but, through the sacrament of baptism, of heavenly sanction. The church, therefore, was in but not of the world; a state within the state.

For these reasons, the church represented a fundamental unity that the state, itself, did not approximate. Within the organization all worldly distinctions were broken down and a new and far deeper fellowship established. New converts, as Gibbon points out, readily renounced home and country in order to connect themselves "in an indissoluble band of union with a peculiar society, which everywhere assumed a different character from the rest of mankind."

The objectives of the church, of course, altered considerably as the hope for Christ's immediate re-

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turn began to wane. From an organization that had looked for triumph over the world through the physical intervention of Christ, it became an organization that sought to triumph in the world through the spirit-led efforts of its own members. It continued, as zealously as ever, to preach the supremacy of Christ's Kingdom. But that Kingdom, it was seen, would have to be established in the midst of and in conflict with a world that was pagan. For such a task the church recognized that it could expect no support outside itself.

Meanwhile, however, it had spread to the four quarters of the Empire. And its gospel, so far as its political significance was concerned, was everywhere the same. Gladiatorial shows, pagan gods and Emperor worship fared no better in the provinces than under the shadows of Rome's shrines and coliseum. An itinerant Christian, travelling from Rome to the Empire's frontiers, would, in every church, have found the immediate and unquestioning fellowship that results when fundamental purposes are genuinely shared.

For this intimate aggressive union modern society has no parallel unless it be found in the Communist party. The Communist, like the Christian of the second century, is bound to his fellows by an almost fanatical devotion to a "cause". He is as much at home with the group of Communist Africans in Johannesburg as with New York's garment workers

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or in the factory communes of Moscow or Leningrad. His party, moreover, is regarded, like the second century Christian church, as an agency subversive of the economic and political status quo and, like the early church, is made to bear the blame for almost every threat that arises against the established order. The analogy, however, stops abruptly at that point. Between the Communist advocacy of force and the early Christian doctrine of non-violence there is no ground for comparison.

But the fact that the policy of the Christian church and the practices of the Christian toward the pagan society of Rome was one of non-violent non-coöperation did not commend them as any less a political menace. In fact, it probably made them appear more dangerous. For one thing, Christian non-coöperation in Rome decidedly complicated the already intricate problem of providing a unified government for the diverse elements within the Empire, very much as Mahatma Gandhi's non-coöperation movement complicated the efforts of Britain to govern the heterogeneous population of India. Again, non-violence was a particularly insidious doctrine, because the government of Rome was founded upon force. To strike against force and to make the blow specific by refusing to bear arms was to strike at the very foundation of the Empire. Moreover, the non-violence practiced by Christians made them a peculiar problem to those who were charged to maintain

order and conformity. The provincial governors, accustomed to see all difficulties vanish before the power of the military, were perplexed when the military was confronted with non-resistance. Ordinary opposition they knew how to handle. But the Christian's opposition was extraordinary. And more than that he seemed to delight in the punishment that it brought him.

For this accumulation of offenses, therefore, the church was judged by Rome to be a menace to society, and a particularly serious menace to Roman society which, already, showed some signs of political senility. The alternatives, as they must have appeared to second century politicians, were three. Either the Christians could be led to alter their convictions at those points where they conflicted with the state; or the state could alter its practices at those points where they conflicted with Christian conviction or, lastly, the Christian community could be destroyed. Neither of the first two alternatives was likely. Rome, in its practices, was as stubborn as the Christians in their convictions. The Christians, therefore, were left to choose between submission to the political order, that is, between accepting Rome as their first loyalty or else, if they persisted in their disruptive allegiance to their gospel, to accept destruction. The choice was not academic, not after Decius launched the first organized persecu-

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tions. It was then a simple question, for the Christian, of moral surrender or physical extinction.

Persecution, of course, brought some apostates. Roman justice saw to it that when the name of a Christian was presented to a magistrate, the suspect was allowed a convenient margin of time in which, if he desired to save his skin, he could flee or, if he chose rather to save his convictions, he could settle his domestic affairs in preparation for the fate that awaited him. Many fled. But with due allowance for these, the persecution years, from the reign of Decius through that of Diocletian, were notable, not for apostasies but for martyrdoms.

Here, however, the persecutions are significant for another reason. They reflect the considered appraisal of a highly organized and ordinarily tolerant government of the political importance of the Christian Church. That the church was in politics is indicated, dramatically enough, by the measures by which those whose business it was to preserve the political order sought to destroy it. Not in any century since, not even the twentieth, have politicians viewed with greater alarm and animosity the activities of organized Christianity. This, from the viewpoint of the current discussion, is an important fact.

The church of the second century was in politics not from choice or for temporal aggrandizement, but because political authority infringed upon the moral convictions of its members. The church gave

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first and almost exclusive consideration to moral and spiritual matters. It sought only a freedom of conscience and the right to live as a free conscience dictated. The dictates of the Christian's conscience, as we have seen, were at serious variance with many of the practices of the state. But it never occurred to the Christian of that early period to compromise for the sake of political or economic or ecclesiastical expediency. His concerns, as I have said, were moral and spiritual. He had nothing to ask from the world of politics or economics for which he would surrender or even compromise those concerns. The way was not open to him, as it is to the modern Christian, to seek to change the political order at those points where it conflicted with Christian morality. Non-coöperation was the only weapon by which he could defend his own moral convictions, but that proved to be both a significant defense and a political weapon of the first importance. He made it plain that therefore in matters which did violence to his Christian convictions, the world of politics and economics would have to get along without his support and coöperation. This neither he nor the Roman world could do for Rome was determined to have unity on terms of its own making and the Christian, on the other hand, was determined to spread doctrines which made unity, on such terms, impossible.

In our present-day discussions of this question, as I have already indicated, one frequently hears "re-

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turn to the good old gospel" prescribed as a sure way to get the church out of politics. It should be noted here that no age witnessed the good old gospel in greater power and purity than that in which, because it was a political menace, Rome endeavored to stamp it out. The preachers, as completely as any modern politician could wish, "stuck to their last". The church did not appear before the Roman Senate with its platform of social and political revolution. What it preached and its members practiced was platform enough. The good old gospel in the hearts and on the lips of proselytizing Christians ran, head-on, into a conflict with the state. When that conflict became specific the Christians, ignorant of the technique and denied the means of constitutional protest, simply resorted to non-coöperation. And that, the only available policy, was decidedly effective, as the story of the Theban Legion and the century of organized persecutions bear eloquent witness. Even present day politicians, harassed by the modern practices of the church in politics, would probably hesitate to prescribe non-coöperation as a desirable alternative, unless, that is, they were ready to meet it as the Romans met it in the Theban Legion and through the persecutions. It must be reckoned as some gain, from the politician's point of view, that today's Christians continue to coöperate with a government that they, none-the-less, believe can and must be made more Christian.

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There have, of course, been significant alterations in the manner and the institutions of government since the reign of Diocletian. And it is, in part, the promise for improvement that those alterations hold out to the Christian citizen of today that leads him to remain loyal to the state and to participate, with his fellow-Christians, in the conduct of its affairs. The fact that he can participate in the processes of democratic government carries with it the right to join with other Christians in social and political efforts to make those processes more Christian. The modern Christian, save in exceptional circumstances, does not advocate political non-coöperation simply because of the fact that, in a democracy, he can work for political change.

But these modern democratic changes in government, important as they have been, are hardly significant enough to furnish any guarantee that a modern resurgence of the good old gospel would not lead to a recurrence of the conflict between church and state that marked the second and third centuries. The good old gospel, in our age, might provide many things. In the presence of the social unrighteousness that exists in modern society, it would certainly not provide political or economic security.

Meanwhile, our political prophet, visiting Rome in the second century, would have found the Christian church involved in politics. Inquiry would have revealed to him that its presence there was unavoid-

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able, as unavoidable as three facts which, to a greater or a lesser degree, have always characterized organized Christianity; its insistence upon a certain manner of life, its zeal to extend that manner of life to all men, and its determination to give that life embodiment in the institutions of society.

Chapter Seven

On Caesar's Throne

IF THE church of the second century was involved in politics because it was anti-worldly, the church of succeeding centuries went into politics because it was this-worldly. It became absorbed with the things from which formerly it had stood aloof. Its leaders sought as zealously to control temporal affairs as their predecessors had striven to shun them. In short, from having been regarded as a threat to the political order, the church in this period became its most unyielding defender. It remained in politics, but the stakes had changed.

Now, it is the record of the church in politics for its own temporal ends that has colored political thinking, and in more modern times shaped political action on this question. The application of that thought and action to any present situation depends entirely upon whether there is evidence to indicate that the church of today is in American politics for such temporal purposes. Such evidence, up to the present, has not been produced. Until it is and as long as the church, like that of the early Roman era,

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takes its political stand on moral issues only, it is not likely to be driven from politics by arguments which apply to conditions which do not exist.

The metamorphosis of the church that displaced moral considerations for temporal interests began with Constantine, who fought his way to the throne early in the fourth century. The throne, at that time, was an uncertain elevation. The fabric of the Empire, as the previous chapter indicated, had begun to fall apart. Constantine's job was to reorganize, to unite, to solidify. Previous Emperors had resorted to the time-honored tactics of suppression, persecution and tyranny. Constantine, casting about for new methods, was drawn to the Christian church. Christian communities, he observed, were characterized by their solidarity, and Christians by their determination—cement of exactly the sort of which he was in need. It occurred to him that if Christianity could not be destroyed it might, at least, be used. If Christians could not be made to accept Rome, then Rome, for its own security, could accept Christianity. This, with imperial forthrightness, Constantine proceeded to bring about. When, in 312, he went out to battle Maxentius for the sole right to rule, Christian insignia were inscribed upon the shields and banners of his troops and, for his victory at the Milvian Bridge, the Christian God was given the credit. Thus, writes Gibbon, "Constantine's vanity was gratified by the flattering as-

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surance, that *he* had been chosen by Heaven to reign over the earth; success had justified his divine title to the throne, and that title was founded on the truth of the Christian revelation”.

But Constantine was more of a politician than a Christian, and remained so almost to the end. He put an end to many of Rome's more offensive pagan practices. But, with toleration, wealth and glamorous attentions, he ended, even more decisively, many of the uncompromising moral and spiritual convictions that had characterized the church. He took the church out of the depressing valleys of persecution into an exceeding high mountain and showed it all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them and said, in brief, “all these things will I give thee, if thou wilt serve my temporal needs.” And the church, being sore distressed, accepted the proposal.

Whereupon, in all material things, it was made comfortable and secure. Churches, long since closed, were opened by Imperial command. Ecclesiastics were granted liberal fees from the Imperial treasury. Flocks of the higher clergy were made welcome at the Court. Society, by the Emperor's example, was encouraged to bequeath its wealth to the church. To each city there was assigned a regular quota of corn to be furnished for the support of church benevolences. To accept Christianity became as profitable as it had been dangerous. In one year, it is

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said, 12,000 men were baptized in Rome and a proportionate number of women and children. And to each convert the Emperor gave a white garment and twenty pieces of silver.¹

Christianity, in this fashion, became a mass movement. It was certainly a church of the people. That is, it included almost everyone within the bounds of the Empire. But it grew, increasingly, to be a church of the world. To join it was the fashionable thing to do. Ecclesiastical zeal was a prerequisite to social and political prestige. And as the crowds increased, so did the hypocrites and nominal believers. Earlier qualities—discipline, self-sacrifice, brotherly love—were less zealously preached and less widely practiced. Doctrinal conformity was established by force, theological opinion regulated by Imperial edict. And thus the status of the church was altered, its objectives changed and its temporal enthronement accomplished.

For the church not only converted the Emperor to Christianity, but was, itself, converted to imperialism. It became not only the church of the Emperor, but the Emperor's church. "The church expected or professed to Christianize the world", Lord Bryce declares, "but in effect the world secularized the church. The Kingdom of Heaven became an Ecclesiastical State."² Having accepted the

¹ Gibbon, *Roman Empire*, Vol. II, p. 274.

² Bryce, *Modern Democracies*, Vol. I, p. 90.

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protectorate of autocracy, it became autocratic; obliged, by political coercion, to conform, it came, in its own name, to insist upon conformity; secured by its alliance with a worldly power, its own ambitions took on the tinge of worldliness.

These developments were almost forced upon it. Rome needed unity and Constantine made quick use of the church to get it. He set about it with characteristic autocracy, to stamp out controversy, division, freedom of thought and to impose one dogmatic creed—once delivered to the saints—upon all those who believed. As a first step to this end he summoned all the bishops of the church and many of the lesser clergy to meet at Nicaea in 325. Here, with expenses defrayed by the government, he proposed to bring the Empire's ecclesiastics to that unanimity of belief which he reckoned to be essential if the church were to serve his purposes. Constantine was followed on the throne by other Christian Emperors no less autocratic. Christians whose views did not conform to the government-supported formulae were outlawed, their churches closed and handed over to politically favored believers. And under such rigorous tutelage the church learned many things unknown to Christians of the earlier centuries. It began to speak a new language, to dream new dreams and to accept new tactics for their execution.

Today one frequently hears the conversion of Constantine referred to, with thanksgiving, as a

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prelude to "the triumph of the church". But quite as frequently devout Christians pray for a return to the church of the vital faith of first century Christianity, meaning, of course, a restoration of that moral and spiritual single-mindedness that prevailed before the church succumbed to the seductions of Constantine and became absorbed with the worldly ambitions that he symbolized.

Once on the road to temporal power the church lost no time in developing an apologetic for its maintenance and extension. The Weltpolitik of organized Christianity probably never had a better, certainly never a more exalted statement, than in Augustine's "City of God" written early in the fifth century. To Augustine the church was the "City of God". Its ecclesiastics were God's divinely appointed rulers. They were the chief executives in "a spiritual society of the predestined faithful." The world increasingly was destined to pass under the rule of this ecclesiastico-political authority. "True justice", said Augustine, "has no existence save in that republic whose founder and ruler is Christ." Having advanced that conception, Augustine did not shrink from its implications. He did not hesitate to declare that when threatened by heretics the church should employ force to bring conformity. To this doctrine of the sainted Bishop of Hippo can be found the apologetic for much of the intolerance and cruelty employed,

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through the Middle Ages, in the name of the church.

"Wherefore", wrote Augustine, "if the power which the church has received by divine appointment in its due season, through the religious character and the faith of kings be the instrument by which those who are found in the highways and hedges—that is, in heresies and schisms—are compelled to come in, then let them not find fault with being compelled . . . Forcible rescue from death is merciful. . . But they wonder that Christian princes are raised against detestable scatterers of the church. Should they not be moved? How otherwise should they give an account of their rule to God? Observe, beloved, what I say, that it concerns Christian kings of this world to wish their mother, the church, of which they have been spiritually born, to have peace in their times."

In short, Augustine looked upon the world from a great height, saw everywhere the signs of political decay, and out of his own great faith proclaimed that the church was called to organize mankind into an ecclesiastically administered Kingdom of Heaven. And for a thousand years, from heights much less exalted, the princes of the church sought to do just that. The Pope claimed himself to be, and to a considerable degree he actually was, the monarch of all Christendom; the priest, the judge, the overlord of

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peoples, kings and kingdoms. The church was not in politics. It was politics.

The church in Rome, even before Constantine, had possessed considerable wealth which it generously employed on behalf of less fortunate churches throughout the Empire. Much of this property was confiscated by Diocletian. But Constantine was prompt to restore it, and by gifts and bequests he zealously strove to increase it. By the fourth and fifth centuries the church possessed property of considerable value in many parts of the Empire. Meanwhile, the Pope—because of the wealth of the church and the Empire-wide ramifications of its power—came to a position of considerable political importance in Rome. By the eighth century Rome, together with the Byzantine territories that survived nearby, was widely looked upon by the princes of Europe as the sacred domain of St. Peter and under the special jurisdiction of the Pope as his successor. The clergy held the higher governmental positions, administered the finances, directed the military, conducted all manner of international relationships, all, of course, under the eye and by the direction of the Pope himself. The church thus won a measure of temporal power and established the nucleus for an ecclesiastically administered world kingdom.

With the establishment and extension of this philosophy there arose no end of conflicts between the established political order and the ecclesiastical order

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of the church that sought at least to dominate if not to supersede it. As a compromise the doctrine of the Two Powers was established in the early Middle Ages and the western world, for a time, passed under the domination of the twin sovereignties of church and state. But such a compromise satisfied the ambitions of neither the state nor the church, and threatened disaster to both. Hildebrand, when he became Pope in 1073, repudiated the idea entirely. In its place he boldly proclaimed the idea that full authority, temporal and spiritual, resided in the church. It was his announced purpose to bring Augustine's dream to pass; to organize the world in a vast, unified kingdom over which, as the Vicar of God, the Pope would preside. Kings and princes, in Hildebrand's view, were but the pro-consuls of a spiritual empire in which, always, the court of last resort was the Holy See. The Pope, in Hildebrand's own words, "alone held the keys of heaven and hell and he alone was able to bind on earth and loose in heaven, to give and to take away, according to the merits of each man, empires, kingdoms, duchies, countships and the possessions of all men."

Hildebrand enforced these convictions in no uncertain fashion. He annulled civil laws. He invested kings no less readily than bishops. He threatened disobedient rulers with summary deposition—a threat which the rulers, save in the case of William the Conqueror, did not dare to ignore. He scattered

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papal legates over Europe and few matters of government escaped their notice or were too trivial for their arbitrary attention. He saw to it, in short, that temporal jurisdiction derived its authority from the spiritual supremacy of the church as invested in the pope.

Convictions of that sort were not, of course, unique with Hildebrand. Precedent for his position and practices had been established centuries before his time. When, in 800, Leo III crowned Charlemagne as Roman Emperor, it was on the accepted assumption that the Pope, as Christ's vicar, had granted temporal sovereignty over Rome to Charlemagne.³ In the year 1000, Pope Sylvester, with the same confidence, gave the royal crown of Hungary to Stephen "under the protection of the holy church the kingdom which you have surrendered to St. Peter, together with yourself and your people, the Hungarian nation; and we now give it back to you and your heirs and successors to be held, possessed, ruled and governed."

Through several centuries this secular authority of the pope was exercised and unquestioned over most of Europe and the British Isles. Gregory VII received the oaths of allegiance from numerous princes and kings; he declared to the king of Hungary that "the kingdom of Hungary belonged of right to the Holy Roman Church;" he gave the gov-

³ Conrad H. Moehlman, *The Catholic-Protestant Mind*.

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ernment of Russia to Demetrius. Pope Hadrian IV, in 1155, gave Henry II of England the right to take possession of Ireland: "It is beyond all doubt, as your Highness acknowledges, that Ireland and all the other islands on which the light of the gospel of Christ has dawned, and which have received the documents of the Christian faith, do of right belong to the blessed Peter and the Holy Roman Church."⁴

Frederick I Barbarossa, in defiance of papal authority, declared: "I am the Emperor of the Romans by the appointment of God." To which the Pope gave sufficient reply: "What is the German king till he has been consecrated at Rome? The chair of St. Peter can withdraw the gifts which it has given."

In the thirteenth century King John of England made another attempt to break the Pope's secular power. England, in punishment, was placed under papal interdict. The churches were deserted. Worship stopped. "The dead were unburied; the living unblest". In the end, King John surrendered. He gave his kingdom to the pope and, with the promise to pay an annual rental fee, received it back again.

The theory back of these assertions of temporal power was given expression in 1302 in the *Unam Sanctum* Bull of Pope Boniface VIII, in which the Pope declared: "By the words of the gospel we are taught that the two swords, namely the spiritual authority and the temporal, are in the power of the

⁴ Moehlman, p. 32.

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church. . . Both swords, therefore, the spiritual and the temporal, are in the power of the church. The former to be used by the church; the latter for the church; the one by the hand of the priest, the other by the hand of kings and knights, but at the command and permission of the priest. . . Therefore if the temporal power errs, it will be judged by the spiritual power, and if the lower spiritual power errs, it will be judged by the superior. But if the highest spiritual power errs, it cannot be judged by men but by God alone. . ."

The authority of the church, thus, was extended across all national boundaries. It claimed the whole of the western world and its inhabitants as its parish. Every child was born a citizen of the church as, today, it is born a citizen of the state and expected to conform to the law and order of the church as unquestionably as citizens of a modern nation are expected to support the political order under which they live. Moreover, the support of the church came, not from voluntary contributions, but from compulsory taxes and every individual was compelled—and the state saw to it—to help defray the expenses of the official institutions of religion. Furthermore, the state undertook to enforce religious obedience to the church on the part of its subjects. On the eve of the Reformation, it was as true in England and Germany as in Italy and Spain that hostility toward the

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church was reckoned the same as hostility toward the state and punished by state action.

Hildebrand's grandiose conception dominated the politics of Europe for two centuries after his death. But with the rise of national states out of the ruins of the Holy Roman Empire his dream began to fade. The stuff out of which his dream was made, however, was neither forgotten nor rejected. To save itself from the fate that had befallen the Empire, the church was driven to alliances with national monarchs. The success of those alliances gave ample room for the exercise of temporal authority. It was not until the Reformation that a prince dared openly to break with the international Church-State of which the Pope was head. And the Reformation and subsequent political developments, although they curtailed the Pope's temporal authority, did not appreciably curtail his temporal claims. Successive Pontiffs, forced by circumstances to a more limited exercise of political power, continued, none-the-less, to reaffirm the right to a universal exercise of temporal authority and to base their claim upon the absolutism of the divine right that they believed to be vested in them.

Now, much of the history of this period of ecclesiasticism makes sorry reading. The church, doubtless, was no worse than the times. But it professed to be better. In fact, it professed to be so much better that the very perfection which it asserted proved

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a ready source of power in the conduct of temporal affairs and, when those affairs were mishandled, provided a ready way of escape from the temporal consequences. The church could blunder and yet survive. And it did. When its power in the affairs of the world was impaired it could continue to exercise, unquestioned, its authority over the affairs of the spirit and, in that exercise, bide its time and restore its strength. Speaking particularly of England and France, where the conflict over temporal affairs was most serious, Prof. Carleton J. H. Hayes⁵ declares that the kings and rulers "never appear to have seriously questioned the religious authority of the Church or the spiritual supremacy of the pope. Religiously, the Catholic Church seemed in 1500 to hold sway over all central and western Europe." It is for that reason that the church, if it was not always able to escape retreat in temporal matters could, always, avoid surrender.

As the national monarchies of western Europe grew in power, however, the friction between state and church increased. Rulers who were autocratic in their own right, objected with increasing intensity to subject their affairs to the review of the super-autocracy of the Papacy. There were several points at which this friction became most serious. It is noteworthy that these points were matters of ecclesiastical authority and not moral principle. The Popes,

⁵ C. J. H. Hayes, *History of Modern Europe*, Vol. I, p. 122.

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from time immemorial, had insisted upon their right to appoint bishops, abbots and other high ecclesiastical officers. Yet these clergy, often, were the leading citizens of their particular land. They held large properties. They were exceedingly influential in government. Their offices, therefore, were political plums of great importance which the monarchs of Europe felt should be theirs to dispense. Again, the clergy held that their land had always been and should continue to be free from taxation. But the states of Europe were perennially in financial straits and their rulers looked, with temporal covetousness, upon the goodly lands of the church and desired to tax them. A third point of friction was in the ecclesiastical courts, which the Church had long maintained, and still insisted should be a court of final appeal for certain types of cases among the laity and all cases that involved the clergy. But civil law was coming into its own and it was inevitable that strong rulers should limit the privileges of the ecclesiastical courts and forbid appeals for judgment to Rome. Finally, there was the ever-present question of the Pope's interference in the internal affairs of various states. The Pontiff claimed to be sole judge of his own rights and powers. But some of the bolder among Europe's monarchs insisted that, within their kingdoms, they would determine the limit of papal authority and direct the exercise of papal influence.

Since the protestant Reformation (See Chapter

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3) and particularly since the revolutionary movements of the eighteenth century, this conflict has frequently, but by no means always, gone against the temporal power. But no Pope, down to the present, has indicated that there has been a change, by one jot or tittle, in the divine right and purpose of the Pope to exercise that power. Here and there a monarch, possessed of more than ordinary presumption, attempted to combat the idea, but usually to his sorrow. Bonaparte I, when he wrested from the Papacy a considerable portion of its territory, forced the demobilization of the Pope's inconsiderable army and exacted a heavy indemnity from the Vatican, believed that he had put an end to temporal power once and for all. But he lived to realize his error. In 1809 he invaded and annexed the remaining papal states. Pius VII forthwith excommunicated the invaders. Whereupon Napoleon bundled him off, a captive, to France. But the Pope proved a troublesome prisoner. He managed to throw the entire ecclesiastical system of France into hopeless confusion and, thankful to be rid of a ruler whom he could not rule, Napoleon allowed the Pontiff to return to the States of the Church. He entered Rome in triumph on May 24, 1814, a vindicated monarch.

It was a well-timed triumph. Europe had had its fill of revolution and blood-shed. Its people were weary with strife, satiated with radical experiments, and eager to find some secure and quiet haven. They

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turned, in the inevitable period of reaction to the monarchies they had sought to destroy and the church which they had abandoned. The Pope, restored to Rome, was therefore in a position to profit by this turn of popular desire. He speedily re-established the Jesuit order, disbanded in 1773 because of the dubious moral nature of its teachings and the dubious political nature of its intrigues. He reorganized the Papal State along lines more autocratic than before, made new treaties with various governments, encouraged the growth of "ultramontanism" which called for a still further increase in Papal authority. As purely local reflections of this resurgence of temporal power "the street-lighting system in Rome and the practice of vaccination were abandoned by the new wholly clerical government as 'revolutionary novelties', the Jews of Rome were again confined to the ghetto, and three hundred of them were rounded up by the police every Sunday to hear a sermon." ⁶

But this period of general reaction was relatively short-lived. Liberalism had found firm root in Europe and liberal governments made fresh inroads upon the states of the Church. In Italy, the liberal movement was jointly directed against Austria and the Papacy. Two years after his accession Pius IX was obliged to flee from Rome in disguise before the Revolutionists. But the refugee Pope found a

⁶ Garrison, *Catholicism and the American Mind*, p. 46.

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friendly reception beyond the frontiers. The reactionary government in France sent out an army to avenge the wrongs that had been done him. Rome was captured and a new government established in the name of the Pope. French troops remained to guard him and, from this shelter, he championed, with untiring zeal, the cause of political reaction.

When, however, war broke out between France and Germany in 1870, French troops were hastily withdrawn and at once Victor Emmanuel, King of Piedmont and Sardinia, prepared to march upon the city. On September 20, 1870, he captured Rome and the inhabitants, summoned to declare their will, voted overwhelmingly in favor of union with the newly forming Italian state. The states of the Church—the oldest continuous secular sovereignty in Europe—came, thus, to an end.

By the terms of the Law of Guarantees, which officially put an end to papal sovereignty over the states of the Church, the Pope was given the use and occupancy of the Vatican, an annual allowance from the Italian treasury of some \$600,000, the right to maintain a papal guard, to send and receive ambassadors, and to enjoy certain personal immunities. But Pius IX, two days after this law was announced, emphatically rejected it. He termed the act of the government "sacrilege and spoliation", and "condemned, rescinded, annulled and abrogated" all its various works. "We declare and protest before

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God and the whole Catholic world," he wrote, "that we are thrown into such captivity that we cannot freely and completely exercise our supreme pastoral authority." ⁷ Successive Popes accepted this position and remained voluntary prisoners in the Vatican. Pius X, in 1903, wrote: "It is the duty of Catholic journalists to keep alive in the minds of the people the conviction that the Holy See finds itself in an intolerable position since the invasion of its civil principality." Both Benedict XV, in 1920, and the present Pope Pius XI, in 1922, have made similar statements. In short, although the papacy has been obliged to surrender its temporal territory, there has been no relinquishment of its demand for the symbols of temporal power and no apparent compromise in its ideal of an eventual world kingdom under its ecclesiastical domination.

This fact has found recent and significant illustration in the Vatican accord with Italy. The Vatican State, which the Italian government now has granted, and to which the Italian monarch has lately made a pilgrimage, if not of penance at least of reconciliation, is not territorially significant. But symbolically its significance is very great. Its ecclesiastically levied taxes, ecclesiastical system of coinage, ecclesiastically controlled handful of soldiers and ecclesiastically directed foreign affairs, are not important in themselves. But they stand for an im-

⁷ Garrison, p. 63.

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portant and unaltered idea. The new Papal State, in effect, is a minute but meaningful indication of the fact that the visions of Constantine and Augustine and Hildebrand, if they have not been realized, have none-the-less not been surrendered. The Roman Catholic Church, for good or ill, is in politics and, for good or ill, proposes permanently to remain there.

Now it is not a part of the purpose of this book to go on from this brief account of the history of temporal power to a discussion of the merits of the question of temporal power itself. That case has been variously argued elsewhere. Here the fact of temporal power is important because it represents the most ambitious expression of the church in politics in all history, and because it is in such striking contrast to the church in politics in the Holy See of the present.

Moreover, it would be wholly erroneous if one failed to point out the enormous compensations that accrued to the states of Europe from the activity and power of the church. Rome, in this long period, produced political as well as religious prophets. That European society emerged from the Middle Ages with even a show of unity is attributable in large part to the fact that, while states rose and fell, were established and then disintegrated, the church continued to reach authoritatively across all of Europe's frontiers. When Europe was in chaos, the church

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maintained itself, both stable and united. Before the Middle Ages were out, it had come to provide a single spiritual authority and a single ecclesiastical order for almost the whole of the Continent. It furnished divided peoples with a single sacred language, developed, in them, an acceptance of a single type of beauty and, most important, refused even when times were at their worst, to allow belief in "the good life" to die out entirely.

Professor Reinhold Niebuhr ⁸ points out that even in the worldly ambitions of the church there was "a measure of ethical idealism to which Protestant thought has given scant justice. In the two greatest exponents of the papacy as an international political force, Gregory VII and Innocence III, particularly in Gregory, the ethical ideal of a unified Christian society which knows how to hold the capricious self-will of nations in check, and how to set bounds to their natural lust for power, is of no small moment in the development of papal policy. The very autocracy of the papacy, which the modern world finds so little to its liking, was elaborated by Gregory in order to save the church from international anarchy and make it an instrument of international unification . . . The mediaeval church revealed both political shrewdness and spiritual idealism in its attempt to dominate the life of nations."

But with a full allowance for the truth of this

⁸ Niebuhr, *Does Civilization Need Religion*, p. 84.

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position, it still remains true that Christianity's greatest venture into the world of politics was a failure. "For more than a thousand years," writes H. G. Wells,⁹ this idea of the unity of Christendom, of Christendom as a sort of vast Amphictyony, whose members even in war time were restrained from many extremities by the idea of a common brotherhood and a common loyalty to the church, dominated Europe. The history of Europe from the fifth century onward to the fifteenth is very largely the history of the failure of this great idea of divine world government to realize itself in practice." The moral power of the church, Lord Bryce points out, "sank lowest just when it had secular authority most fully at its disposal."

From the first centuries down to the present the church has sought to redeem the individual. But its ambition, as the history of temporal power clearly proves, has never been confined there. It has sought, also, to exercise a second function, namely, the organization of society. These two functions, in the high vision of Augustine's City of God, were held to be complementary. The one followed directly from the other; a Christian Kingdom as the natural consequence of a Kingdom of Christians. But the dream failed to materialize. The church, temporarily, at any rate, established its Divine Right to rule, but the territory over which that rule was established

⁹ H. G. Wells, *Outline of History*, p. 526.

hardly deserved to be called the Kingdom of Heaven.

This failure has been variously explained. Mr. Wells ascribes it to the presence, in the church, of too much theology and not enough religion, and to a defective papal electoral system that brought to the Pontifical throne men too far advanced in years to reign long enough or with sufficient understanding to meet the vast problems of their office. But those are not altogether adequate explanations. The first is too general and indefinite, and the second too incidental. Lord Bryce comes much nearer the truth when he lays the failure to the fact that "the more the church identified itself with the world, the further did it depart from its own best self." In his view "such victories as Christian principles have from time to time won in the unending strife of good and evil have been won by their inherent moral force, never through earthly weapons."

But the "inherent moral force" of Christian principles has never been victorious in that unending strife between good and evil, until those principles have been given concrete and earthly significance. The use of the earthly weapons of politics for the establishment of an earthly ecclesiastical kingdom brought the church to a departure from its best self, because it substituted temporal for moral purposes. But the legitimate use of those weapons for the establishment of an earthly moral order does not neces-

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sarily involve such a departure, and is in short simply a recognition of the fact that if such an order is to be set up in this world at all, it must be fashioned by whatever honorable tools this world employs to build its institutions. So long as the Christian refuses to transfer his hope in a Christian world to the hereafter, he will be driven to use the legitimate though earthly facilities at his disposal for the establishment of a Christian world in the here and now. Whether it is a mark of strength or of weakness, it is a characteristic of Christians that they have been unwilling to limit their concern for the triumph of their faith to the mere proclamation of its moral principles, however inherently strong. They have insisted, though with varying degrees of emphasis, upon the embodiment of those principles in earthly lives and in an earthly society. That one rejects the idea that an ecclesiastical state would be the best possible social embodiment of Christian ideals, in no way involves a rejection of the Christian conviction that those ideals must be given definite expression in terms of the institutions which man, for the ordering of the relationships of this world, has created.

Christians of the early centuries, of course, were concerned about the strength and the growth of the church. But their church was significant, not because of the likeness of its moral aims, but because of their dissimilarity to those of other social organi-

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zations. The church was the expression, in the aggregate, of the way of life of the individual Christian. The Christian was concerned about the progress of the church almost wholly because he was concerned for the triumph of the way of life which the church embodied and for which it was the custodian. When conflict arose with the state, it was not a conflict between two similar institutions striving for supremacy; but, rather, a conflict between certain moral ideals and convictions and a political order with which they were irreconcilable. It was not because the church was identified with the Roman world that it threatened the Empire. It was, rather, because the church was so wholly committed to a manner of living so much at variance with that of the Roman world.

During the long struggle for temporal power this, as we have seen, ceased to be true. The church, when it ventured on such a grand scale into the world of statecraft, took on many of the characteristics of the forces that, already, were struggling there, and chiefly because it accepted many of their purposes. The church sought to control the state, but instead of transforming it, was transformed by it. It sought to copy what it might have changed. To be sure, it never surrendered its spiritual function. It reached down to the average individual and strove to furnish him with the means for his personal salvation. And there is ample evidence of the significant exercise of

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that function on every page of the church's history throughout this period. But, as an ecclesiastical organization bent upon the temporal organization of society, it ceased to serve as the aggregate expression of the moral and spiritual convictions of changed and religiously dynamic individuals. The church, in politics, accepted the aims and ambitions of the established political order and, as a result, became very much like other political organizations, sometimes better, sometimes worse, generally more powerful.

In short, the church, seeking to conquer the world, for itself, itself became worldly. It sacrificed that moral and spiritual single-mindedness which had made early Christianity a conquering force and which might have given sufficient power to the Mediaeval church to transform mediaeval society. Society has always been peculiarly defenseless against a great moral force. In this period, however, it was not defenseless against the church because the force of the church, dedicated to a temporal mission, was not primarily moral.

Chapter Eight

Protestant Patriotism

PROTESTANTS, doubtless, have learned many things from the struggle for temporal power of the Roman Catholic Church. But they have not learned to keep out of politics. Politics was in at the birth of Protestantism, helped to provide sustenance for its infancy and was never an altogether absent influence through its youth. The course of the political history of the Christian church was not interrupted by the Protestant reformation. It was only changed. And the change was not altogether for the better.

For Catholicism, in the Middle Ages, stood for certain political ideals which Protestantism generally has neglected. Whatever the faults of its politics, the Roman Catholic Church had the significant virtue of being international. We have already noted that its language, its worship, its religious royalties, reached indiscriminately across all national lines. Within its sanctuary man-made distinctions disappeared and men of all lands and classes stood equal and as one before their Maker. No international

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organization comparable to it ever existed or, for that matter, exists today. It was a League of Peoples. The Popes sought for ten centuries to make it a League of Nations with Geneva at Rome and a hierarchical monarchy in place of Council, Assembly and Secretariat. They failed. But mankind, ever since, has done them tribute in its dreams.

They came near enough to success to reveal that there might be salutary possibilities in an international organization powerful enough to bring the actions of states under review. The world since 1918 has been endeavoring to establish just such an agent of review for security against another war. The mediaeval church, of course, was autocratic in its government, dictatorial in its methods, and not always moral in its purpose. Modern nations, with Senates and other democratic features, would neither attempt to set up such an absolute authority nor accept its rule if they did. But the parallel is not invalidated by that fact. Autocratic Europe in the Middle Ages benefited by the international autocracy of the Church. Democratic Europe is finding benefits, these days, from the international democracy of the League of Nations. Europe would not, willingly, return to the ecclesiastical dictation of an autocratic papacy. Neither would it willingly surrender the increasing, but democratically established authority of the League. The result of such a surrender would be a return to that kind of interna-

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tional irresponsibility that existed before 1914 and precipitated the World War. And the Roman Catholic Church gave that ideal its first significant expression.

But there is an even more important point in the effort of Catholicism to bring the world under the jurisdiction of the church. The super-state that the popes sought to establish was designed to be much more than an international convenience; more than a clearing house for diverse national points of view. It was designed, fundamentally, to establish the principle that states, no less than individuals, are subject to a higher law than that of the secular authority. The law which the church sought to make supreme appeared frequently to be ecclesiastical rather than moral; and that, as we have seen, accounts in considerable measure for the church's failure. But there is something of more than passing political significance in the spectacle of the Emperor waiting in the snow at Canossa for the favor of the pope. Various motives may be found to explain why Hildebrand kept him waiting. But back of those motives was the fundamentally right principle that there is, in the world, a higher order of law than that represented by the state. The moral significance of that principle was greatly weakened by the worldly ambition of the papal hierarchy. But the principle, itself, is right and will remain so until

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the moral authority of religion is surrendered to the temporal prescriptions of politics.

The conviction is growing today that this ideal, in its moral not its temporal aspects, will bear reconsideration. There are a few, already, who are prepared to assert that, under certain circumstances, the way of the Christian is not the way of the state. In our own times and after our own manner we will one day recognize the truth which mediaeval Catholicism, however unwisely, sought to establish: that the law of God is not identical with and must be supreme over the law of man; that the destiny of His Kingdom is not identical with and is more important than the destiny of any particular nation. It will not be pleasant, in times of crisis, to attempt to practice any such conviction. The consequences for the individual Christian who refuses to check his conscientious objections, don the uniform of conformity and march in the state's parade will probably be somewhat like those which befell the stiff-necked and non-coöperating Christians of the first century. But it should be recalled that first century Christianity, girded with such uncompromising single-mindedness, conquered the Roman world. There may be both compensation and incentive in that recollection.

Now, it should be noted that the Protestant Reformation did not ignore the ideals which were at the foundation of the Roman Catholic attempt

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to dominate the world. On the contrary, the Reformation repudiated them. The papacy was indicted on too many counts to allow for any objective judgment of the good qualities that it may have represented. It followed inevitably, from the passions of the period, that the Reformation churches should swing away from any semblance of an international authority to the opposite extreme of alliances with national states. The authority of the papacy was rejected. In its place the Reformation accepted the authority of the state. And now, for some time Protestantism, particularly in the United States and Great Britain, has been attempting, if still somewhat feebly, to rid itself of the political commitments of that alliance.

It is generally accepted that the Protestant Reformation began with the courageous anti-ecclesiastical gestures of Martin Luther, with the eve of All Soul's Day in 1517, when he nailed the ninety-five protests against the sale of indulgences to the door of the Wittenberg church; or with the 10th of December, 1520, when, in the presence of a little company of his friends he burned the canon law—"the godless book of papal decrees"—outside the Wittenberg wall. And unquestionably the spark was supplied by these events. But the tinder had been long accumulating. In a considerable measure it was political tinder. Religious issues there certainly were. But it is doubtful if, at the outset, the

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religious issues figured any more significantly than those of politics and economics. If Luther was dominated by a religious motive, the princes who supported him were dominated largely by politics, and the peasants by certain pressing economic considerations. Many of the peasants in the Reformation desired to find freedom from their grievous burdens; most of the princes desired to find support for their budding nationalist ambitions.

The times were ripe for such a movement. For three centuries prior to the Reformation Europe had witnessed the growth, to greater strength and ambition, of national monarchies. By the opening of the sixteenth century England, France, Spain and Portugal had well-established state governments. Feudalism was being gradually suppressed. Political ambition grew apace. What had formerly been merely local pride was lifted to the level of patriotism. Distinctive languages and literature appeared. In short, Europe's national boundary lines began to be more closely drawn. There were no tariff walls. But there were the even more insurmountable walls of pride and ambition. Nationalism was in the making.

But the nationalistic dreams of Europe's monarchs were not altogether undisturbed. The international authority of the Roman Catholic Church was, as yet, unbroken. In fact, it had not yet even been successfully challenged. Princes looked out on

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their kingdoms and discovered that the church, alone, stood between them and absolute sovereignty. The clergy of all orders refused to give allegiance to the secular government. The vast lands held by the church paid no taxes into the secular coffers, and were, in fact, beyond the reach of secular authority. The Church, in short, was a state, and within and above the state. And the princes were not happy about it. They dreamed of a day, and conspired for it, when their treasuries would benefit by the ecclesiastical possessions and their authority extend, unquestioned, over the Church itself. They desired to rule without benefit of clergy. To this end the Reformation served them well. They had needed just its religious sanction to make the final break.¹

Now it should be noted that the issue which was emerging was not that of democracy versus absolutism. It was rather the issue of Roman Catholic absolutism versus nationalist absolutism. Neither Luther nor the princes who backed him held our ultra-modern ideals of popular rights. On the contrary, the political aims of the masses of the people, insofar as they had any definite aims, were regarded with indifference or alarm. In fact, when the German peasants revolted in 1524, Luther joined with the most blood-thirsty in demanding that they be suppressed. "Have no pity on the poor folk," he cried, "stab, smite, throttle who can." And when

¹ Carleton J. H. Hayes, *History of Modern Europe*, Vol. I, pp. 124-125.

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these "poor folk" demanded the abolition of serfdom, Luther—with reasoning that has been applied to pagan social institutions in more recent times—declared that such a radical procedure was unchristian, since serfdom was sanctioned by God and to abolish it would "make God a liar."

The issue at the outset of the Protestant Reformation, therefore, was not democratic. It was a straight-out conflict between two types of monarchies: the temporal monarchy of the state and the spiritual, though temporally asserted, monarchy of the church. It was in considerable measure because the lines for this conflict were already drawn that Luther's leadership found such an immediate and influential support. Luther, as I have already pointed out, provided princes with the kind of an apologetic that their nationalistic ambitions demanded.

It was Luther's doctrine that the power of the state had been "ordained by God for the chastisement of the wicked and the protection of the good." He insisted that it must be permitted to exercise its authority "unhampered throughout the whole Christian body, without respect to persons, whether it strikes popes, bishops, priests, monks, nuns or whoever else." Comforting doctrine, that, for kings.

But he was even more specific. He referred to the distinction between "the spiritual estate" of popes, bishops, priests and monks, and the temporal

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estate of princes, lords, artisans and peasants; and calls it a hypocritical invention. "A cobbler, a smith, a peasant, every man," he says, "has his own calling and duty, just like the consecrated priests and bishops and every one in his calling or office must help and serve the rest so that all may work together for the common good." Moreover, Luther calls the attention of the German rulers to the ecclesiastical pomp of Catholicism, for which (sic) the Germans are expected to pay. "What the Romanists really mean to do, the 'drunken Germans' are not to see until they have lost everything . . . If we rightly hang thieves and behead robbers, why do we leave the greed of Rome unpunished? for Rome is the greatest thief and robber that has ever appeared on earth or ever will and all in the holy names of the Church and St. Peter." After such an arraignment Luther points out that secular rulers are duty-bound to correct these evils and outlines a plan for preventing the state from sending too much money to Rome; "taking it out of the country," as we would say.²

Such a doctrine furnished the princes of Europe with their Magna Charta. Under it the Divine Right, formerly vested in the papacy, came, readily, to be vested in the king. And kings, thus divinely anointed, were left free to do about as they pleased. The church no longer held any power of veto over

² *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Vol. 23, p. 4 ff.

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their acts. They were answerable to God alone, and even to Him, as it generally turned out, on terms of their own making. In actual practice a "reformed" ruler could, and usually did, seize the property of the church, houses, monasteries and lands. He could—and did—put an end to taxes collected by and for Rome, abolish the ecclesiastical courts and the clergy under his own authority. He was able thus and for the first time to stand as absolute master in his own domain. And nationalistic autocracy had come into its own.

"The Reformation was thus essentially a stage in the disengaging of the modern state from that medieval, international ecclesiastical state which had its beginning in the ecclesia of the Acts of the Apostles."³ "Viewed from the political standpoint, the Protestant revolt was caused by the rise of national feeling which found itself in natural conflict with the older cosmopolitan or catholic idea of the Church. It was nationalism versus Catholicism."⁴ "The Reformation was in some of its aspects simply a simultaneous revolt of the various new nations of Europe against the restraints of the International papacy. In Germany, Scotland and finally in England, the nationalistic motive was a decided force in destroying the prestige of the old religion."⁵

The historical consequences of the destruction, by

³ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

⁴ Carleton J. H. Hayes, *History of Modern Europe*, Vol. I, p. 125.

⁵ Niebuhr, *Does Civilization Need Religion*, p. 91.

the Protestant Reformation, of much of the international authority of the papacy is clearly indicated by Carleton J. H. Hayes.⁶ The rise of Protestantism, he declares, united the northern Netherlands against the Catholic king of Spain and, through that conflict, brought the Dutch their independence. Conversely, the loyalty of the southern Netherlands to Catholicism, led to their separation from the northern territory and the establishment of the Catholic state of Belgium. The spread of Lutheranism in Scandinavia enhanced the power of the monarchies there and made of the Swedes the chief agents of Protestantism on the continent. Similarly, the allegiance of the Scotch to Presbyterianism greatly speeded the growth of their national feelings. The defeat, by England, of the Spanish Armada was hailed as a victory not only for England but for English Protestantism. In fact, in England and Scotland, loyalty to Protestantism was accepted as synonymous with loyalty to the government; and in Spain and France loyalty to Catholicism was, likewise, the mark of patriotism.

The Protestant Reformation, therefore, did not take the church out of politics. At the outset it only established a new party. Its platform, in the main, was national, not international. It called not for an ecclesiastical authority above the state, but for an ecclesiastical alliance with it. Particularly under

* C. J. H. Hayes, *Essays on Nationalism*, pp. 339-340 (Macmillan).

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Luther's influence, the right of the church to establish moral authority over the secular which in Catholicism had been surrendered to temporal ambition, was surrendered to nationalistic allegiances. In the case of established churches, at any rate, the church and the state were one. "No man", said Richard Hooker, "is a member of the commonwealth who is not also a member of the Church of England." And as late as 1791, Burke declared: "An alliance between Church and State in a Christian Commonwealth is an idle opinion. For in that Commonwealth, Church and State are one and the same thing."

And one recalls that similar opinions were firmly held and emphatically stated as late as 1914. It was the business of the church to reveal God. But in such a time of crisis it was the business of the state to give that revelation the proper political direction. The armies of Christendom went out to war each led against the other by its own state-supported God.

Organized Christianity had surrendered its moral authority very much as current critics of the church in politics say it should again be surrendered. Having refused to oppose the state, in the interests of a higher standard of national conduct, the churches were obliged either to remain silent or to endorse the evil policies that the nations pursued. The presence of the church in politics today is at least one

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indication that that moral surrender may never again take place in any such wholesale fashion. Christians are slowly beginning to reassert the convictions first declared by the early church that the laws of God and His relationships are more sacred than those of the state and cannot be violated at the state's command. Despite the fact that the Reformation put the established churches in politics on the side of autocracy, the seeds of that conviction were sown in the Reformation period.

When Luther stood up at Worms to declare for a full freedom of conscience in the face of this world's authority, he started thoughts in the minds of men which, eventually, were to help to turn them from an unquestioning acceptance of secular power to a determination that such power must be moulded to conform to certain standards of human relationship. Today Protestantism, in the United States, is dominated less, I believe, by the spirit of reaction that came upon Luther after the Reformation Movement got under way, than by that spirit of moral independence which characterized him when he made his declaration of freedom of conscience at Worms.

There were some in Germany who, from the very first, viewed with alarm the teachings of Luther. The alarm was not from any particular doubt as to the teachings themselves, but from the possibility that they might be too specifically understood by the masses of the people. And, as everyone knew,

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the masses of the people—no less than the princes but for different reasons—were restless, discontented with their lot and ready for trouble.

Thus, the rulers of Europe heard their subjects announce "the liberty of the Christian man;" heard them counsel their fellows to "call no man master." And the sound of such doctrine was unpleasant. The ideas of the Reformation were starting "dangerous" tendencies of thought which the political supporters of the Reformation proposed at all costs to destroy.

But the people who were inspired by these upsetting ideas went beyond the declaration of them to set up definite, independent organizations. Most notable of these, perhaps, were the Anabaptists in Germany. Lord Bryce credits the Anabaptists with the first statement of democratic principles in the history of modern governments. Certainly they were altogether too nonconformist for the spirit of the times. Moreover, their notions appealed particularly to the lower classes of people—another fact that brought the movement under suspicion. In brief, the Anabaptists renounced the worship of the Lutheran, Zwinglian and Roman churches, declared the right of each congregation to choose its own officers and administer its own affairs, refused to accept the overlordship of the state. Civil government was looked upon as an unwelcome necessity in a still

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imperfect world, but Christians were held to have no rightful share in it.

The "reformed" princes of Germany, had no intention of allowing any such movement to live. They had broken with the church of Rome. For that connection they had substituted a union of church and state with themselves as the religious dictators. Such a church-state union served their political purposes. It placed at their disposal the very real assets of religion, which previously had been at the disposal of the papacy. It was no part of their plan to see those assets dissipated through the rise of independent religious organizations, existing beyond their authority.

Thus there was launched another of those drives for conformity which have blackened the pages of Christian history from the days of Constantine and the Council of Nicea. The Anabaptists were hounded throughout Europe. Their leaders were martyred. But their cause seemed to thrive with persecution. For a time, about 1529, it appeared to be a real threat to orthodox Protestantism. And Roman Catholics regarded it as the logical outcome of the revolt from the authority of Rome. In the end the Anabaptist movement resulted in firmer cementing of the alliance between church and state in German territories. The church was needed by the princes who desired to develop strong national states, with themselves as absolute sovereigns. The state was

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needed by the church in order to maintain itself against the opposition of Rome and the threat of nonconformist Protestants. In the union of church and state a means was found whereby these politic-ecclesiastical purposes could be admirably served.

But the threat of the ideas released by the Reformation were not only political. They were economic. The economic lot of the peasants was bad. It resembled, but was considerably worse than the lot of the peasants of Russia prior to the revolution. Serfdom had not disappeared. Taxes were excessive. Injustice was widespread and there were no adequate means of redress. And the people were waiting for a Deliverer. Already, in England, the preacher John Ball had told his congregations that "things will never go well in England so long as goods be not in common and so long as there be villeins and gentlemen. By what right are they whom we call lords greater folk than we? On what grounds have they deserved it? Why do they hold us in serfage? If we all came of the same father and mother, of Adam and Eve, how can they say or prove that they are better than we, if it be not that they make us earn for them by our toil what they spend in their pride? They are clothed in velvet and warm in their furs and their ermines, while we are covered with rags. They have wine and spices and fair bread; and we oatcake and straw and water to drink. They have leisure and fine

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houses; we have pain and labour; the rain and the wind in fields. And yet it is of us and of our toil that these men hold their state." ⁷

Here, clearly, is an assertion of that freedom of thought to which the Reformation, despite its reactions, gave rise. In the confidence of that freedom, men here had begun to look at their own lot as not irreparable; they had begun to examine the place that God, as His will was revealed in the New Testament, desired them to hold. They had begun to awaken to a sense of their own importance. It was inevitable that, with freedom to think and freedom to read and with a faith in the revelation of Jesus, they should come to such an awakening. In that awakening—religious in its origin—a good bit of the democratic history of succeeding generations was involved. Moral issues began to come to the fore in the minds of religious men and secular establishments, that disregarded such considerations, were placed in peril.

Small wonder that the land-owners assailed John Ball as a "mad preacher"; and told him, in the language of the day, that the business of the church was to preach "the good old gospel" and not dabble in matters about which, obviously, preachers could know nothing.

In one respect, of course, the reactionaries were right. Such preaching was bound to stir up trouble.

⁷ H. G. Wells, *Outline of History*, p. 714.

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It did. And England had on its hands the peasant movement led by Wat Tyler. France, at a little earlier date, had similar trouble. In the French "Jacquerie" in 1358 the peasants rose up, swept through the French country-side, burned the chateaux of the rich and laid waste their lands. And these were signs of the times. Observing rulers knew well enough that something was stirring among the people. Just what it was they were not exactly sure. They did not realize how scriptural was the foundation for this trouble or how much more of it there would be. But they were sure of one thing, that sedition of whatever sort required violent treatment. And that treatment they were prepared to give. It was a matter of wise policy to prevent the spread of subversive ideas.

Although Luther early realized that an alliance with the nobility was the better part of valor, his teachings thus proved to be decidedly unsafe for public consumption. By the time this discovery was made, however, it was too late to segregate them. The dangerous nature of the doctrines that Luther set forth was enhanced by the fact that the peasants, particularly in Germany, already looked upon the Roman Catholic church as the source of their chief grievances. The ecclesiastical organization was denounced almost as roundly and for somewhat the same reasons for which it has been recently denounced in Russia. There was a definite if somewhat

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vulgar literature of anti-ecclesiasticism. The tithe the various and sundry fees demanded for the sacraments were looked upon as an unjust form of taxation. The wealth of the clergy was regarded as a crime that "cried to heaven," when contrasted with the poverty of the people, upon whose labor both clergy and nobility depended.⁸

It was to this kind of a society that Luther preached. Obviously the masses of the people neither clearly understood nor were particularly concerned about his theology. But its political and economic implications they could readily appreciate and they found that there was adequate religious basis for the interpretations they made. When Luther assailed the church, the common people heard him gladly. When he cried out against its excessive wealth and unjust taxes, his language needed no interpretation. When finally, he called upon the lords to seize the property of the church, in the name of God, and end the overlordship of Rome the peasantry appropriated his advice to themselves.

The Peasants' Revolt of 1525, although it had back of it a long list of unredressed grievances, found its apologetic in such teachings. The Twelve Articles that the peasants drew up were a popular restatement of the advice that Luther had given to the princes, and that he hoped would be confined to their use. The peasants' demands called for the

⁸ *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Vol. 23, p. 10.

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teaching of Christianity as a way of life and that each local community should be given autonomy in the choice of its pastor, with the power to depose him if he proved unsatisfactory. Such a chosen leader should "teach us the gospel pure and simple, without any addition, doctrine or ordinance of man". Since the tithe of grain was held to be scriptural, it was stipulated that it should be continued, but used for the support of the pastor and the poor of his parish. The abolition of serfdom was demanded "since Christ has delivered and redeemed us all without exception by the shedding of His precious blood, the lowly as well as the great." And the articles ended with this declaration: "It is our conclusion and final resolution that if one or more of the articles here set forth should not be in agreement with the word of God, as we think they are, such articles will be willingly retracted if it be proved by a clear explanation of Scripture really to be against the word of God."

In such a declaration there is some foretaste of the spirit and the purposes of the modern church in politics. The "meddling" of devout people in the moral matters of human relationship had very definitely begun. The peasants of Germany, however fanatical, however badly led, had discovered in how many significant particulars the message of Jesus applied to the hard and unjust situations of their own lives.

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But Germany was far from ready for any such alliance between Christianity and the rights of the common people. The teachings of the Reformation had political significance, but not for the peasantry. And Luther's counsel to the rulers of Germany to show no mercy toward the revolters was wholeheartedly accepted. The uprising was crushed out with great cruelty. Some fifty thousand peasants were killed. The power of the national rulers, buttressed by a national religion, was greatly increased. And many of the peasants, who had hailed Luther as their Deliverer, returned, disillusioned, to their serfdom to await a better day and a more friendly prophet.

It can hardly be said that John Calvin would qualify as such a friendly prophet. But the implications of his theology, like those of many others of the "reformers", were democratic. Calvin, himself, was not inclined to put too much faith in the masses. He held that it was useless to argue about the best form of political institutions; that circumstances would settle any such debate. For his own part, he preferred "a well-tempered liberty under a wise oligarchy."⁹ As in the case of Luther, however, the doctrines he taught were given political significance of a sort that he would hardly have countenanced. But he speeded the return of the church to Jesus' conceptions of human worth and

⁹ Bryce, *Modern Democracies*, Vol. I, p. 84, footnote.

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his influence initiated movements which were to help to bring that value to a fuller realization.

It was in no sense Calvin's purpose to take the church out of politics. But he was determined that in politics it should not be subject to the state and that, in itself, marked a step away from the prevalent idea of the church's subservience to the state. He proposed to replace the hierarchical system of the papacy with a theocratic scheme of his own devising. This system he had an opportunity to try out in the Swiss city of Geneva. Geneva at the time (1536) was in the midst of a religious and political revolution. The city was just shaking off the feudal authority of the Duke of Savoy and the ecclesiastical authority of the Catholic church. Calvin lent himself to this revolutionary enterprise and, at its completion, was easily the first citizen of the city. For more than twenty years, thereafter, he remained Geneva's religious leader and political "boss".¹⁰

His aim, at Geneva, was to reestablish the conditions which he believed to have existed in the church during the first centuries of his history. He wished to make it entirely independent and self-governing. The regulations of the church were enforced, in the main, as the law of life of the citizens. There was all manner of infringements upon "personal liberty". "No more festivals, no more jovial reunions, no more theatres or society; the rigid monotony of an

¹⁰ Hayes, *History of Modern Europe*, Vol. I, p. 143.

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Auestere rule weighed upon life. A poet was decapitated for his verses . . .”¹¹

Such a regime, however democratic in theory, was not democratic in practice. It is in the theology of Calvin and not in his religio-political government in Geneva that one discovers any democratic implications. Calvin taught the doctrine of predestinarianism and the eternal salvation of the elect. He was aware that the international organization of the papacy could never be overthrown save by another organization, equally strong and compact. For the creation of such an organization, his theology was admirably adapted. The Roman Catholic church had made man feel inferior. Calvin “made the elect man feel that he was God’s vice regent.” He debased himself before God, but struck out with both fists before man. The elect man, by virtue of his divinely established superiority could, justifiably, claim the world as his inheritance. And he did, as more than one imperial dream bears witness. It was this religiously inspired self-confidence that led the Independents in the English Civil War to make use of the first declarations of democratic ideals among modern nations.¹² It was this, too, that lay behind the quiet political and economic resoluteness of the Puritans. In fact, the assurance with which this doctrine inspired men has had a definite relationship to

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

¹² Bryce, *Modern Democracies*, Vol. I, p. 85.

the world-embracing conquests of Anglo-Saxons ever since.

"The Puritan", writes Macauley,¹³ "was made up of two different men: the one all self-abasement, penitence, gratitude, passion; the other proud, calm, inflexible, sagacious. He prostrated himself in the dust before His Maker; but he set his foot on the neck of His king." And he staked out the world as his kingdom. Here, it might be added, is a complete displacement of the earlier Protestant idea that the church must not criticize, with the idea that it had not only the right but the duty to criticize and to direct. It is this spirit of moral independence that has led Protestantism widely to break with its old state alliances, and assert itself in politics exclusively on behalf of moral issues.

There are, as we have already seen, some indications that the moral uncertainty which characterized Protestantism so long as it remained in league with nationalism is giving way, and that the Church again, as in the first century, is beginning, however slowly, to put moral issues before temporal considerations. Organized Christianity, during the last few decades, has at last begun to declare that the state, like the individual is subject to moral law and, as in the case of the individual, the church can have no association with the state when that law is violated.

¹³ *Critical and Historical Essays*, Everyman's Library, Vol. I, p. 186.

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But the Christian Church was not taken out of politics by the Protestant Reformation. Its politics became widely nationalistic. It took from the state a subsidy and support and gave to the state its divine sanction. With so much at stake in the political status quo it was inevitable that the established churches should add to Jesus' teaching to "render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that God's," the further doctrine that what one rendered unto Caesar was also rendered unto God.

Despite this main tendency, however, the Protestant Reformation released dangerously democratic ideas. It set up the principle of freedom of conscience, it began the restoration to man of a sense of his own divine importance, it aroused in him an unrest and dissatisfaction with conditions which were unjust and convinced him of his right to stand before parliaments and kings and proclaim that righteousness is of more importance than security, and that over every political and economic order there is a higher moral order to which men and institutions must be held accountable. It is in these ideas that the Church in Politics in the United States finds its apologetic.

Chapter Nine

The Separation of Church and State

THE present religious situation in Russia is an extreme illustration of the consequences of the alliance between Church and State which put the established churches in politics on behalf of nationalism. Religion, to the Russian Soviets, "is the opiate of the people." By fair means or foul they propose to stamp out the habit by making it impossible to get the "drug". How far they will succeed remains to be seen. Such an attempt on such a scale has never before been attempted. But it is significant that this vast anti-religious zeal has its source in considerations which are fundamentally political. The Soviets, when they came to power, surveyed their revolution-won Empire and came to the conclusion that the permanence of their rule required the destruction of the church, a conclusion which from their viewpoint was inescapable.

In pre-Revolutionary Russia more than in any other modern nation, the church was dedicated to the maintenance of the political and economic status quo. The fact that that status quo, in many par-

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ticulars, was evil only made the political contributions of the church more important and necessary. For the docility which even the Czar's Cossacks could not always guarantee could generally be inculcated by the priests of religion. When conditions came to an issue, the masses of the people were kept in line by force. But it fell to the lot of religion to see to it that conditions did not come to an issue. Thus, the popular doctrines of the church were those of Christian humility, submission, patient suffering here that one might merit reward hereafter. Such preaching, strengthened by superstition, was a powerful antidote for whatever poisons of unrest threatened to infect the people. How completely the church had sold out to the state is graphically illustrated in the career of Pobiedonostsev who for twenty-five years prior to the Revolution was procurator of the Holy Synod of the Russian Church. His hatred of democracy and his scorn for the cherished hopes of the proletariat were unbounded. His religious policy was that of the mailed fist and his persecutions were relentless. The record of Constantine Pobiedonostsev provides unlimited material for those, in present day Russia, who are out to prove that the church is the tool of autocracy. Small wonder that the Soviets have placarded the country with their conviction that "religion is the opiate of the people." Politically, and in so far as Russia is concerned, there is basis for that opinion. The church

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sold its services to the established order. Now that that order has passed a new order, professing contrary doctrines, it regards the church as a menace to its plans.

The rise of the church-state alliances, particularly with reference to the Protestant Reformation, was briefly reviewed in the preceding chapter. Not only in Russia, but in many places, the church has paid severely for this political affiliation. It has paid by being obliged to face the hostility of liberalizing movements, political and economic, ever since. For the leaders of these movements have been quick to see that the makers and defenders of the status quo generously supported the church when times were normal and, when unrest developed, expected its pacifying aid. That aid generally was not withheld. It was not withheld chiefly because the temporal fate of a state allied church was involved in the fate of the established political order from which it received sustenance and temporal survival was held of greater consequence than moral power. Thus proponents of change in the established order, when they did not actually regard religion as the opiate of the people, came, none-the-less, to look upon organized Christianity with considerable suspicion.

We have already noted that the church has always been in politics. It should be noted, further, that whenever the church has gone into politics on behalf of its own ecclesiastical organization rather than for

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moral ideals, it has almost always stood with the reactionaries. One can understand, therefore, why it is that the church's modern espousal of the social gospel is sometimes not taken very seriously by either conservatives or liberals. Conservatives, who may have cold chills at the "radicalism" of the social gospel, are none-the-less inclined to retain their confidence that if a crisis should come the church would not forget the sources from which it has been receiving butter for its spiritual bread. And liberals have been inclined to the same opinion.

Thus, the church, because of its historical associations, has had the opposition of many of those with whom it should have been allied and has been under serious obligation to many others whose interests and practices it should have been free to condemn. And also because of its historical associations the proponents of a new order long since came to look upon the church as no friend of change and, as a result, they have either given it a wide berth or included it in the category of the contemporary institutions which they condemned. It is only with the rise of the social gospel which has put the church in politics on behalf of moral and human values that this conviction has begun to weaken.

The results of the union of church and state were everywhere practically the same. The church looked to the state to maintain its exclusive privileges against all independent minorities. The state looked

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to the church to provide Divine sanction for its policies. The league was evil. Political prophets of the Eighteenth century were quick enough to recognize that fact. Liberal opinion, in that century, rose up in a great flood to overwhelm the institutions of absolutism. One of the foremost of those institutions was the state allied church, Catholic and Protestant.

This was realized, particularly in France, by the philosophers of the new order. Voltaire, for example, was no atheist. "If there were no God", he declared, "we should have to create one." But with all the power of his great genius he was anti-church. In fact, he was only able to appreciate religion if it was entirely disassociated from ecclesiastical organization. He attacked, unceasingly, the claims of the churches, Protestant and Catholic, of infallibility; their reliance upon persecution; their suppression of freedom. He did more, doubtless, than any man of his time to break down the foundations of religious authority while, at the same time, espousing the cause of religious liberty. He was followed by others who went beyond him, by the Encyclopedists and by Rousseau. "Man is born free," declared Rousseau, "and everywhere he is in chains." And the chains were of ecclesiastical quite as much as of political fashioning. Religion was looked upon not only as the opiate of the people. In alliance with the state, the church had come to be regarded as one of their chief task-masters.

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Out of these convictions arose the doctrine of the separation of church and state. It was apparent that political freedom could be established, only with great difficulty, in the presence of an autocratic and state supported ecclesiastical order. It was apparent, also, that religious liberty—the right to worship God after the dictates of a man's own conscience—was one of the fundamental human principles which the newly forming democracies must establish. Religious liberty was a specific democratic ideal and the separation of state and church a safeguard for democracy in general.

Now it should be noted that the origin of this ideal was religious rather than political. The non-conformists groups who had stood and suffered for freedom of conscience allied themselves, very generally, with the liberal forces that were working to establish democracy. It was from among these groups, as Lord Bryce points out, that the first modern democratic ideas found expression and it was in these groups, too, that the separation of church and state, as one essential of democratic government, found first support.

In fact, the theory, itself, had had religious expression long before it found a place in the Constitution of the United States. It had been set forth in the Augsburg Confession of 1530, written by Melancthon at the dictation of Luther. "Concerning civil affairs," it declared, "our churches teach

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that civil ordinances, when they are lawful, are good words of God and that it is right for Christians to take the magistrates office . . . Christians, therefore, must of necessity obey their governors and laws, save only when they command to sin, for then they must obey God rather than men . . . Seeing then that the ecclesiastical power deals with things eternal, and is exercised only by the ministry of the Word, it does not interfere with the administration of civil affairs any more than does the art of singing. For the administration of civil affairs has to deal with matters other than the gospel deals with . . . Wherefore the ecclesiastical and civil powers are not to be confounded . . . Let it not intrude into the office of another than itself; let it not transfer the kingdoms of this world; let it not abrogate the magistrate's laws; let it not withdraw from them lawful obedience; let it not hinder judicial decisions touching any civil ordinances or contracts; let it not prescribe laws to the magistrates as to the form of the Commonwealth. In this way do our teachers distinguish the functions of either power, while they exhort men to hold both in honor and to acknowledge both as the gift and blessing of God."¹

This declaration, however, was honored chiefly in the breach, as we have seen. Protestants did confound the ecclesiastical and civil powers. They did

¹ Quoted by S. Parkes Cadman, *Christianity and the State*, pp. 285-286.

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leave their ecclesiastical precincts to intrude into political affairs. They did prescribe laws as to the form of the Commonwealth and the separation of church and state remained only an ideal.

The actual establishment of this doctrine was a distinctly American contribution to the science of government. Its most noted early advocate, doubtless, was Roger Williams, himself a preacher who cared more for freedom of conscience than for ecclesiastical security. Roger Williams openly rejected the accepted doctrine of government by divine right and substituted, therefore, the democratic ideal of a compact with the people which guaranteed religious liberty and ended the church-state alliance. "A people," he contended, "may erect and establish what government seems to them most mete for their civil conditions." Such a popularly instituted government, as he saw it, would provide for the divorce of the ecclesiastical from the secular. What Christians believed and how they organized their beliefs were, to him, not the business of the civil authorities. The church, he pointed out, is like a business corporation which "in matters concerning their society may dissent, divide, break out in schisms and factions, sue and implead each other at law, yea, wholly break up and dissolve into pieces and nothing and yet the peace of the city not be in the least measure impaired or disturbed, because the essence of the city is essentially distinct from those

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particular societies . . . Civil magistrates were never appointed by God defenders of the faith."²

That Roger Williams was a dangerous distance ahead of his times is apparent when one compares his declaration with the famous Dale's Code in Virginia which provided a death penalty for blasphemy, for irreverent remarks about the Trinity, for persistent blasphemy or for a third failure to obey the law of Sabbath observance. It prescribed whippings for failure to attend church or for disrespect to the clergy; and required a thorough study of the articles of faith by every member of the colony.³

A century and a half after the founding of Rhode Island, however, Virginia had so far passed out from under the Mediaevalism of Dale's Code as to undertake its historic experiment in religious liberty. In 1776, at the convention when separation from the mother country was decreed, the new government adopted the Bill of Rights which in one section declared: "religion, or the duty that we owe our Creator and the manner of discharging it, can be directed only by reason and conviction and not by force or violence, and, therefore, all men are equally entitled to the full and free exercise of religion, according to the dictates of conscience; and it is the mutual duty of all to practice Christian forbearance towards each other." A year later Jefferson drew

² Quoted by Moehlman, *The Catholic-Protestant Mind*, pp. 104-105.

³ *Idem*, p. 108.

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up his "Act Establishing Religion Freedom" which, however, did not become a law until 1786. The act declared: "no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place, or ministry whatever; nor shall be enforced, restrained, molested, or burdened in his body or goods, nor shall otherwise suffer on account of his religious opinions or belief; but all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain their opinions in matters of religion, and the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge or affect their civil capacities." In 1787 this principle was applied to the entire Northwestern Territory which was under the jurisdiction of Virginia. Four years later the first ten amendments were added to the Constitution of the United States. The first of these Amendments declared:

"No religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States.

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

Thus, for the first time in history, the principle of full religious liberty and the doctrine of the separation of church and state were embodied in the fundamental law of a nation. Today, in the United States, there appears to be considerable alarm in certain quarters at what is held to be a growing disregard for that doctrine. The more

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courageously the church speaks out in terms of to-day's society, the greater the fright in these quarters. The question of separation of church and state, we are emphatically told, was settled forever by the First Amendment. So it was. And in a rather wide acquaintance among political parsons I have yet to find one who had any doubt that it was settled right.

Since the adoption of this Amendment, according to Lord Bryce, "no voice has even been raised in favor of reverting—I will not say to a state establishment of religion—but even to any state endowment or state regulation of ecclesiastical bodies. It is accepted as an axiom by all Americans that the civil power ought to be not only neutral as between different forms of faith, but ought to leave these matters entirely on one side, regarding them no more than it regards the artistic or literary pursuits of its citizens. There seem to be no two opinions on this subject in the United States."⁴

But this doctrine, none-the-less, will bear a closer examination. Such an examination is almost certain to reveal that, at the present time, the First Amendment is being applied to situations which its authors never intended it to cover. The churches are in politics. But neither now, nor at any time since that Amendment was adopted have they been in politics to seek political preferment for themselves as eccle-

⁴ Bryce, *American Commonwealth*, Vol. II, pp. 556-557.

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siastical bodies. As Lord Bryce indicates, they would oppose, probably more strongly than any other organization of Americans, any such attempt. "A church established by the state would sacrifice the independence it now possesses, because it would also be controlled by the state and it would be exposed to the envy and jealousy of other sects." "Independent churchmen were the first to see this fact, which today is so generally accepted that churchmen of all faiths in America would unite in its defense." ⁵

But still it is said with vehemence that the churches are in politics today in violation of this distinctive American doctrine. An answer to that contention will be found in the convictions, to which some reference has been made, which led to the adoption of the Amendment in the first place.

In the light of the previous discussion in this chapter the reasons for this Amendment will not be difficult to find. In 1770 there were established, that is state-supported churches—either Congregational or Episcopalian—in nine of the American colonies. The new government was obliged to determine whether or not it would continue this old-world institution. Its decision was not long delayed. The foundations of that government reflected Thomas Jefferson's "mystic faith in the rectitude of human impulse," and its Constitution was designed to guar-

⁵ *Ibid.*

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antee that "human impulse" would have the fullest freedom at every point. Religious freedom and the separation of church and state were an inevitable part of that guarantee. But the first amendment, which made a general grant of religious freedom, went much beyond that, and by separating church and state provided a safeguard for freedom in general.

The alternative to the separation of church and state was establishment, and establishment, as Jefferson and Madison were well aware, meant privilege. The new government had broken with political privilege. It was essential that it should break, just as definitely, with religious privilege. Back of that break were certain democratic principles. It was an obvious contradiction of those principles for the state to perpetuate, in a single institution, a system which, as a whole, it had repudiated. Moreover, an established church meant a church for the aristocracy. The fact that Jefferson was an avowed free churchman and Alexander Hamilton an adherent of the Church of England is more than coincidence. It reflects with some accuracy the divergent political conceptions of the two men. An established church would have been to Hamilton's liking, because its influence would have been conducive to the development of political ideas akin to his own. It would have provided one foothold for aristocracy and privilege within the democratic order. It was un-

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doubtedly the clear recognition of that likelihood that led to its prevention in the First Amendment.

But the desirability of such a safeguard was indicated by the whole of the history of the struggle of the church to advance its own ecclesiastical interests. The framers of the Constitution were well aware that state and church, in alliance, had jointly inaugurated and upheld the theory of the divine right of kings, and the infallible nature of ecclesiastical organization. The new American government set its face resolutely against such autocratic doctrines and recognized in its place the principle of the divine right of the people. The full establishment of the divine right of the people required that adequate safeguards be set up against the possible assertion of the divine right of any other political agency or individual.

In short, the stability of such a genuinely popular government required that its political channels be closed to the activities of those who might seek to establish the temporal supremacy of some other sovereignty than that of the people. The church was singled out, in the First Amendment to the Constitution, because its political history indicated that, if given official and established status, it might be expected to seek to do just that. From this chapter out of the history of the church the fathers of American government took warning.

There were, thus, two fundamental considerations

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back of the doctrine of the Separation of Church and State. First, there was the principle of religious liberty which required that the democratic rights which the new government sanctioned should be established not only in respect to man's political relationships but in regard to his religious convictions. Second, there was the safeguard against the threat to democracy of a state-supported church whose influence if a crisis arose might be thrown against democratic system itself.

The First Amendment established a free church in a free state and pledged the government to maintain that freedom. It did not, by any stretch of the political imagination, prescribe that the church must keep out of politics. It only declared that the state could not grant to any particular church the official political standing involved in establishment. The First Amendment was necessary, not because it was desired to put the church in any special political category among America's free institutions; it was necessary because it was determined to take the church out of the special category in which European governments and the governments of some nine of the American colonies had maintained it.

Once establishment was forbidden and religious liberty secured, the church, under the Constitution, came into the same position relative to the government as that of any other voluntary association of citizens. Aside from those two issues there is no

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Constitutional limitation upon the political activities of the churches. The present movement to disfranchise the churches may have some legitimate foundation, but not in the Constitution of the United States. The spokesmen for the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America do no more violence to the Constitution when they petition Congress, than the representatives of the National Education Association or the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers. From the standpoint of our fundamental law there is no more reason for attacking Bishop Cannon as a political parson than for assailing Nicholas Murray Butler as a political pedagogue. The Constitution makes no discrimination between a cassock and a cap and gown.

It is conceivable, of course, that some religious body might attempt, in violation of the Constitution, to secure establishment or to curtail religious liberty. That is conceivable. But in all the vituperative attacks against the church in politics in recent times I have never heard it said that such a move was likely or that ever, in American history, it had been attempted. When such a move is made there will be some reason to cry out against a violation of the doctrine of the separation of Church and State. Until that time, however, the critics of the church in politics will have to look elsewhere for a legitimate basis for their attacks.

Meanwhile, it is difficult to see how such a move

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could be attempted, because in American churches, as in the American government, authority is derived from the consent of the governed. When, with disestablishment, the churches in America were thrown upon their own resources, they began to develop those democratic characteristics which have since been the source of their strength, both in regard to their own organizations and in relation to the government. A little investigation at this point would be illuminating to some of our clergy baiters. To find out who puts the church in politics one needs to go, not to the denominational headquarters, but to the general assemblies of the evangelical churches of the country. It is in those assemblies and by the popular vote of a representative body of layman and clergy that the policies of the churches, whether they relate to world peace, prohibition, or the election of bishops, are made. Back of the church in politics are mandates which are significant because their validity is found in the same democratic procedure that gives validity to the actions of the state. And no mandate has ever been or is likely ever to be handed down by these representative bodies which would put the church in politics to secure political preference for the church, itself, as an ecclesiastical organization, or to seek to bring about its establishment.

In fact, one gets the impression, from the current critics of the church in politics, that their real aim

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is not to defend their belief in the doctrine of the church and state. That doctrine needs no defending. Their aim appears, rather, to establish their belief in the doctrine of the separation of the church and society. And the more effectively the churches fight against social sin and injustice, the more emphatically this belief is set forth. But this latter doctrine will require considerable defending. The churches of America are committed to the doctrine of the separation of church and state. It safeguards an ideal to which they, as fundamentally as any other social group, are committed. But there is every indication that they will not cease to deny the doctrine of the separation of church and society. Such a principle threatens moral ideals, for the establishment of which Christians increasingly believe themselves to be responsible. No one, of course, can abridge the right of American citizens to advocate the separation of church and society. But it should be made clear that not in the First Amendment or elsewhere in the Constitution is there any basis for their agitation. And it should be just as clear that if the churches, cowed by these attacks, should abandon the social concerns that now take them into politics they would, on the one hand, rob society of one of its most effective regenerative influences; and, on the other hand, surrender their commitment to Jesus' plans for the establishment of a Christian world.

Chapter Ten

The Liquor War

FOR at least two generations it has been widely assumed by American church people that the problem of the use of intoxicating beverages in the United States constituted a moral issue. And the educational machinery of the churches was directed to the development of an opinion among churchmen that would bring that issue to some proper settlement. In countless Sunday Schools, on Temperance Sunday, boys and girls were taught the evils of strong drink and of the drink traffic and went home repeating, as their Golden Text: "wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging and whosoever is deceived thereby is a fool".¹ At least once a year in the average evangelical church the preacher could be counted upon to return for his text to the twenty-third chapter of Proverbs: "look not upon the wine when it is red, when it sparkleth in the cup, when it goeth down smoothly; at the last it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder".² And however much opinions may have varied as to the proper method

¹ Proverbs, 20:1.

² Proverbs, 23:31, 32.

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for solving the problem, it was generally agreed that the church was well within its province as a Christian organization when it spoke out on the moral questions raised by the liquor business.

Recently, however, this assumption has been challenged. It is now not only denied that liquor constitutes a moral issue, but it is contended that the stand of the churches on the question does violence to the teachings of Jesus. Reference was made in an earlier chapter to the Congressman who announced recently that after considerable Biblical research he had come to the conclusion that the churches, by their stand on this question, represented the Anti-Christ. With like piety, a wet periodical not long since pointed out that "for more than eighteen hundred years the Church of Christ sanctioned the use of alcoholic beverages in moderation. How, indeed, could a church professing to be Christian do otherwise, without repudiating its Lord who had not only drunk it but made it? The truth is, that no church, or body of churches, advocating prohibition is Christian. You can call it Mohammedan, if you will, for Mohammed was a prohibitionist, and so are his followers. But Christian it is not."

Scriptural basis for this position is customarily found in the story of Christ's first miracle when, at the marriage feast in Cana of Galilee, he turned water into wine. "The guests", so the same wet paper declares, "were evidently disconcerted to dis-

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cover that the source of their innocent merriment had run dry and Christ who, unlike a prohibitionist, was no enemy of innocent merriment, miraculously created another flowing bowl."

Now a good deal of ingenuity has been exercised in attempting to provide a properly dry explanation of that event in Cana. I have heard it argued, with some eloquence, that on such occasions the "wine" used was strictly non-intoxicating and that what Jesus really did was to turn the water into grape-juice or some other non-alcoholic beverage. But such an argument is a little too far-fetched. I do not believe that the authority of the Scriptures or the case against liquor is helped by undertaking to make out that Jesus was a teetotaler. It will be recalled that one criticism leveled against Him as He stated it was that "the Son of Man came eating and drinking and they say, Behold a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber". He would hardly have been subject to any such criticism if the "wine" referred to were only grape-juice. No, I think that the church, when it seeks the sanction of its Founder for the dry movement, will have to find it elsewhere than in His complete abstinence from the use of liquor. But such sanction, I believe, can be found. It can be found, not in any specific doctrine that Jesus laid down on the subject, but rather in the human values that He sought, Himself, and called upon His disciples to seek to establish.

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Jesus left specific counsel on relatively few of the moral issues that confront the churches. Moral issues, he knew, would change. Old questions would find solution and new questions appear. What He crowded into His three short years of ministry was not specific advice on all the problems of His day, but certain principles according to which the problems of any day might find solution. "To assume", writes Dr. Jefferson, "that Christianity must now do only the things which Jesus did and to imagine that preachers are doing their full duty when they repeat only the words which the apostles wrote is to reduce Christianity to a form of tyranny and to blight the aspirations and intuitions of forward-looking men . . . Christianity is not a religion of a book but of a Spirit, and that Spirit is forever leading men into wider spheres of thought and action. The church has been studying and working and suffering through more than nineteen hundred years and through all those years it has been learning more of the mind and purposes of the Eternal . . . The forms of Palestine are not binding on America and what was adequate in the first century is not adequate today."

What is adequate today, if not the forms, are the fundamentals on which Jesus insisted the current practices of any age should be established. He taught His disciples to pray "Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth." And He made it fairly

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plain that God's will called for the establishment of human relationships and the creation of human institutions which were conducive to the development of a more abundant life for all men and the destruction or transformation of those which were not. Jesus said nothing, specifically, about the abolition of human slavery. But most people, nowadays, will agree that the institution of slavery is a violation of the human values that Jesus came to set up and a hindrance to the development of the fuller life that He declared He had come to provide. It is in the light of the same human values that the churches passed judgment on the liquor business. It may be that the judgment was pronounced before its time. It may be, too, that we are not yet in a position, fully, to execute it. But to prove that that judgment is out of harmony with the teachings of Jesus will require a vast amount of benevolence in describing the liquor business and a vast amount of ingenuity in interpreting the New Testament. The history of liquor is more than a record of "innocent merriment". And the ministry of Jesus is more than the record of what happened at the marriage feast in Cana of Galilee. A knowledge of both of those facts is essential to an understanding of the attitude of the churches on this issue.

It may be instructive to recall a few features of the real—not the glorified—picture of the conditions that drove the church toward unanimity in

regard to the liquor business. My own boyhood was spent in a succession of small towns in the Middle West. There were saloons on nearly every corner, festering places that spilled their filth through the community. Well nigh all the misery and degeneracy and vice in those small towns—and they had their share—were bred and nurtured behind those swinging doors. Gentlemen patrons (there were a few) used the back doors. Self-respecting women chose to cross the street rather than to risk stench and indecencies in passing the place. Children, returning in broad daylight from school, scurried past the door on the run. The liquor shop was a place of disease. The disease was contagious. The children knew it; knew it from the boys and girls of drinking parents that they saw in school and the liquor-broken homes from which these boys and girls came.

In those days it was customary to point out that liquor paid the school taxes. And so it did. But I never heard a school teacher say that liquor was a help in the task of training children; or a town constable declare that liquor was an aid in inculcating respect for law; or a preacher give thanks to the Almighty that the blessings of so much liquor has been vouchsafed to the community. No, in these small towns the faith of intelligent people that men and women and little children had an inalienable and God-given right to an abundant life called for the summary handling of this commodity because,

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as the records of the community adequately proved, it did violence to the qualities of love and courage and faithfulness by which that abundance might be won.

And it seems a fairly safe assumption that Jesus would have agreed with them. Even the eloquence with which the case is now being argued hardly persuades one that He would have walked unseeing through the streets of such communities or, having followed the trail of liquor, that He would have kept silent about it. It is conceivable, of course, that He might have repudiated those who were endeavoring to the best of their ability to follow and establish His way of life and aligned Himself with the liquor interests which were not. That is conceivable. But, somehow, it cannot be made to seem likely; not even by eloquent reference to the marriage in Cana of Galilee.

The churches, doubtless, have made many and grievous mistakes in their dry crusade. But it should be fairly clear that they made no mistake when they accepted liquor as a moral issue. And many of the wets, in their fanatical condemnation of the saloon, seem ready to agree to that. Where the churches erred, so these wets go on to say, was in carrying their perfectly justifiable movement against the saloon to the extreme of establishing prohibition. The saloon, they say, was a moral issue. Prohibition is not. Quite the contrary.

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Now that assertion is noteworthy. If in ten years, prohibition, at its worst, has been good enough, by contrast, to convince the wets that the saloon is done, then obviously this noble experiment has been far from fruitless. For that conversion of sentiment the churches well can boast. But we can afford, perhaps, to make a closer examination of this line of thought. Such an examination will take us into the history of the prohibition movement and bring to light some of the reasons why the churches, in their drive against liquor, ended up with the Eighteenth Amendment and the Volstead Act.

The history of the dry activities of the churches indicates that prohibition did not come ready-made. It grew. In fact, many of the evangelical churches of the country have been on the water-wagon less than a century. As recently as 1815, a Congregational minister described the festivities at an ordination service when, in his own words, "a broad side-board at the parsonage was covered with decanters, bottles, sugar, drinking glasses," and the preachers uproariously fell to. At about the same time the Methodists proposed a resolution in their General Conference to prohibit preachers from engaging in the retail liquor business. The resolution was speedily defeated. Liquor vending at that time appears to have been a popular ministerial side-line. The Methodists did not get around to banning intoxicating liquors as beverages until 1848 and it

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was not until 1868 that they defined "intoxicating liquors" to include ale, lager beer, cider and wines.³

Meanwhile, the first organized prohibition movement in the United States was started, not by political parsons, but by more than two hundred farmers of Litchfield County, Connecticut. After all manner of liquor-inspired troubles, these land-owners finally got together to prevent the use of alcoholic beverages among the farm hands employed in harvest time. History does not record who, then, spoke out for Personal Liberty.

Long before this, however, individual preachers had recognized clearly enough that liquor was a moral issue and had spoken out on this subject. Prohibition was far from their minds. The appeals they made were not even for total abstinence, but, rather, for temperance. In 1673, Rev. Increase Mather preached and published two sermons, not against drinking but against the sin of drunkenness. In 1726, Rev. Cotton Mather drew up a "Serious Address to Those Who Unnecessarily Frequent the Tavern" and sent it out with the endorsement of twenty-two other ministers. Half a century later another preacher, Rev. William Phillip Otterbein, went much beyond this and excluded from communion all those who indulged in strong drink. Church opinion, however, did not begin to find organization on this question until early in the nineteenth century when

³ The historical material here used was largely taken from *The Evolution of Prohibition in the United States*, by Ernest H. Cherrington.

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Dr. Lyman Beecher aroused the Congregational churches of New England and led in the establishment of a number of temperance organizations, including the Massachusetts Society for the Suppression of Intemperance.

The attitude of this early period, it should be noted, was in strict conformity to that which is frequently prescribed for the churches today. There was no movement, worthy of the name, for temperance reform. Preachers had not yet gone into politics on the dry question and Congress was spared the embarrassment of ecclesiastical petitions. It is true that the Baltimore Yearly Meeting of Friends in 1801, after listening to an Indian chief describe the effect of liquor upon his people, did break into the political arena far enough to send a copy of the Indian's address to Congress. But the emphasis, for the most part, was directed to the habits of the individual and confined to members of the separate communions.

This policy of admonishment was first abandoned for a more ambitious program against liquor, by the Presbyterians. The General Assembly of that church, in 1810, pointed to the growing evils of intemperance and to the necessity for more vigorous and concerted action on the part of the various denominations. To speed such action a special committee was appointed and charged to report on the problem at the next Assembly. This report was made

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in 1811, whereupon another special committee was appointed to propose to the next year's Assembly what specific action could be taken to arouse public sentiment. The report of this second committee which was adopted in 1812, called upon Presbyterian ministers to preach against intemperate drinking, condemned drinking places as public nuisances, and called for action against them.

The Presbyterian position was quickly accepted by other churches, but it was not until 1826 that the movement began to be significantly organized across denominational lines. In that year, the American Temperance Society, changed later to the American Society for the Promotion of Temperance, was established in Boston, with state-wide ramifications. This Society, it should be pointed out, did not represent a new element in the temperance movement. It was and remained an organized expression of the growing convictions of church people of whatever affiliation on this question. The effect of this expression of opinion was immediate and wide-spread. Within one year after its organization, 222 local auxiliaries had been organized throughout New England, the Atlantic seaboard states and as far west as Kentucky, Ohio and Indiana. The growth which began with the establishment of the American Temperance Society was not, from that time forward, stayed.

Two facts are apparent from this early history of

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the movement. First of all, it was a church movement. A great many organizations, without formal church relationship, joined the crusade, but their membership was almost entirely drawn from among church people. With few exceptions the churches provided the movement with its significant leadership. And, with very few exceptions, practically all of the Protestant bodies in the country officially endorsed it.

Preachers, in those days as today, were told to stick to their last and to preach the good old gospel. They were told that the corner church had no right to meddle with the business of the corner saloon. But the meddling continued. It continued because liquor was not a corner proposition. It permeated the entire community. Just how evil were the effects of its permeation the preacher, better than anyone else save, perhaps, the doctor was able to judge. He did judge, in no uncertain terms. And because of his convictions the church went into the forefront of the drive against liquor and remained there.

In the second place, the anti-liquor movement was aimed not at the destruction of the liquor traffic, but at its regulation and the extension of the practice of total abstinence.

But with the Civil War, tactics and program were considerably changed. The churches continued, with unabated zeal, to provide the chief impetus behind the drive against liquor, but the drive itself came

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gradually to be directed toward the complete elimination, by local option, of the entire liquor business. In fact, as early as 1835 a grand jury in New York City, asserting that two-thirds of the crime and poverty of the city were due to this business, declared: "It is our solemn impression that the time has now arrived when our public authorities should no longer sanction the evil complained of by granting licenses for the purpose of vending ardent spirits, thereby legalizing the traffic at the expense of our moral and physical power." After the Civil War that conviction was generally accepted by the various organizations working for temperance reform, and a political solution was sought for a problem which the mere preaching of temperate habits or the advocacy of total abstinence seemed inadequate to meet.

One of the major reasons which led the churches to take the liquor question into politics is found in the fact that the liquor interests, themselves, had already taken it there. Temperance and total abstinence, in their day, were as strenuously opposed as prohibition is in ours. In 1876 the Brewers organized "to bring political action against the candidates disposed to the total abstinence movement." Since local option is now advanced as a reasonable substitute for prohibition, it is instructive to recall that, in 1879, the National Liquor Dealers' Association was organized and declared that its first and

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primary purpose was to defeat any moves to extend the right of local option. In 1881 the Brewers' Congress came out against woman suffrage. The current cry for personal liberty is very resounding, but it is not very new. In 1882 a first line defense for the saloon was organized in Chicago under the title of the "National Personal Liberty League", and, in the name of that doctrine, declared their opposition to any restrictive measures whatsoever. In 1890, the liquor dealers of North Dakota openly refused to obey the newly enacted state prohibition law. In 1893, the State Liquor Dealers' Association of Ohio voted to enter more actively into politics, and set forth a platform the chief planks of which called for the repeal of the law making it an offense to sell liquor to habitual drunkards and modification of the Sunday closing law. The churches went into politics on the liquor question because the very regulative measures which today's wets declare to be morally necessary met, when first proposed, with the well-organized political opposition of the liquor interests. It was necessary either to submit to an unregulated traffic or to go into politics and fight for that regulation. In view of the present widespread agreement that regulation is highly desirable, it will probably be agreed, since the churches of a generation ago were the chief proponents of regulation, and since regulation could only be se-

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cured by political action, that the churches had justification for going into politics to secure it.

But here again it will be pointed out that the churches should have been content with regulation. And they might have been, if regulation had regulated. But it did not. And national prohibition, in brief, is a result of that failure. The churches found out that the business of selling liquor, under whatever restraints, remained an outlaw. From the very first up to the ratification of the Eighteenth Amendment the wet forces fought every measure—local option, zoning, eight o'clock closing—that was designed to put liquor under legal restraint. And when these laws were passed they were promptly violated. Liquor was no more restricted before prohibition than it has been prohibited since. "Bootlegging" and "speakeasies" are not prohibition-made phrases. They hark back to the liquor lawlessness of regulation days. The city of Omaha, Nebraska, where I lived for a short time as a boy, was under a Sunday closing law. I had a morning paper route. On Sundays the front doors of the saloons on my route were closed—in compliance with the demands of the law. But the back doors were always open—in compliance with the demands of personal liberty.

Years ago laws were passed prohibiting the sale of intoxicating liquor within the reservations set aside for the American Indians. Liquor met the law then, as today, with bootleggers. In 1906, Congress

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appropriated \$25,000 to enforce the law against selling intoxicating liquors among Indians. And liquor supplied more bootleggers. In 1907, Congress appropriated \$50,000 to enforce the same law. Again, more bootleggers. In 1910, Congress appropriated \$40,000 for the same purpose; in 1913, \$75,000 and in 1916, \$100,000. And persistently the answer of the liquor business to liquor laws was lawlessness.

The American people experimented in good faith with the liquor business for three-quarters of a century. They gave liquor every chance to develop some saving grace and the liquor trade every chance to make good. But it did not make good; and that fact, perhaps more than any other, accounts for the presence of the Eighteenth Amendment in the constitution of the United States.

Wet opinion, of course, offers another explanation to the effect that the Eighteenth Amendment was foisted upon the American people by a highly organized and fanatical minority at a time when a large number of the nation's voters were overseas. But this explanation overlooks two facts: first, that national prohibition had been constantly before the Congress ever since 1913; second, that every member of the Congress that submitted national prohibition to the states had been elected in or before November, 1916—five months before the United States entered the war.

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And as I have observed the electoral returns from the communities to which the several million young soldiers returned, I have wondered just where their wet votes were being cast, or if they are still being robbed of their franchise. In fact, the frequent outbursts against the dictates of the dry "minority" are decidedly diverting. I have just read an anti-prohibition diatribe in a current periodical on the tyranny of the 51 per cent. Well, it must be conceded that if we are to have tyranny it is more likely to be American to have it on behalf of the 51 than of the 49 percent. But, if the prohibition majority is only 51 per cent, then that last one per cent is the largest, the most stubborn and the most pervasive one per cent in all history. This "one per cent", prior to the adoption of the Eighteenth Amendment, had already put 85 per cent of the area and two-thirds of the population of the United States under dry laws. It brought about the submission of the Eighteenth Amendment to the states, it secured ratification by more states than any other Constitutional Amendment and by more overwhelming majorities; eighty per cent of all the members of the lower Houses in the ratifying states voting favorably and eighty-six per cent of all the members of the Senates. Moreover, the law brought to pass by this "one per cent" has been in effect for ten years. Each year, according to wet reports, its size has decreased. And yet, up to now, all the concentrated attacks have been

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unable to alter it and it remains so potent that anti-prohibitionists, realizing that it cannot be defeated by ordinary governmental procedure insist that a Civil War will be necessary to thwart its aims.

Thus, a brief review of the history of the dry movement in the United States will indicate that prohibition was no overnight proposition. On the contrary it was an evolutionary development that grew out of the moral conscience of the nation, stimulated by the churches and, in the end, supported by the nation's business leaders. Today, whatever its shortcomings in operation, the presence of the Eighteenth Amendment in the Constitution of the United States is a vindication of the unhurried processes of democratic government. As an American, one may be permitted to wish that the methods of the wets to defeat the law revealed as much patience and respect for orderly procedure as the methods of the drys in establishing it.

But despite the success with which the nation, led by the church in politics, secured this law, it still is true, I believe, that the success of the law in operation leaves much to be desired. I know it to be true that a great many people who, a decade ago, were convinced that the law could be made to work and were willing to support every legitimate effort to work it, are now just as earnestly persuaded that it is bound to fail. These people believe, in all honesty, that liquor is a moral issue; and that the churches

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were justified when they set out to outlaw it. But, just as honestly, they now contend that ten years have made conditions progressively worse and that a new solution for this admittedly serious problem must be found. The prohibitionist greatly errs when he fails to give ear to these honest wets or concludes that all opponents of prohibition either stand to gain economically by the defeat of the law or else are besotted degenerates. The dry position would be considerably strengthened and, certainly, dry tactics might be somewhat changed if some of the wet contentions were given closer examination.

It seems to me that such a closer examination is particularly obligatory upon the churches. From the very first day of the dry crusade down to the present, the activities of the churches, as I have pointed out at some length, were based upon the assumption that this was a moral issue. By "this" I mean liquor, not prohibition. We have prohibition, but the moral issue still remains, for the problem still confronts us as to how, under prohibition, we can get rid of liquor. We have got rid of some of it, but in my estimation too much remains to allow for the conclusion that the moral issue has been settled. It has not been settled, not with the 32,000 speakeasies reported in New York City and bootleggers accessible, in relatively adequate numbers, in every fair-sized community of the land. If then this moral

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problem still confronts us, the question is, What can the churches do about it?

Fundamentally, they can make liquor the issue. I do not mean the liquor of a generation ago, but the liquor of the present. As a matter of fact, the drys sometimes seem to be more concerned about the fate of the Eighteenth Amendment, than about the fate of the commodity that that Amendment was designed to eliminate. The Eighteenth Amendment is merely a piece of legislative machinery and it is good machinery only insofar as it does the job for which it was created. Charges were recently hurled half way across the Continent between a New York columnist and the authorities of Topeka, Kansas. The columnist asserted that, in Topeka, he had been served liquor and I, for one, do not feel ready to doubt it. That possibility does not seem nearly so remarkable as the fact that, once he made his charges, everyone apparently set out to deny that liquor was served or, even, could conveniently be had in Topeka. Perhaps the denials were well-founded, but if they were it is fairly safe to say that Topeka is almost unique among American cities. But it seems to me that, so far as the moral problem is concerned, the task in Topeka and elsewhere in the United States is not to demonstrate that liquor is not in current use, but, rather, to demonstrate that liquor in current use is as much a social liability as it ever was.

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As a result of the failure to make this demonstration, prohibition is widely regarded, not as a moral but as a purely political issue. In fact, it is the wets these days who are doing most of the talking about morality, and however ill-founded their contentions, the very fact that they have begun to make such general and often such effective use of the language of the drys is proof enough that the drys have allowed themselves to be switched from a moral thoroughfare on to a political side-track.

The demand upon the churches, in regard to prohibition, therefore, is to restore liquor as the issue, not the liquor of a generation ago but liquor as it is currently peddled. It is the failure to bring the anti-liquor drive up to date that has given fanatical wets the opening they sought. The most rabid wet will agree that booze—as Frances Willard or John Gough fought it—is a thing to be outlawed. But today's booze, he will insist, is an entirely different matter. And in a multitude of ways, through moving pictures, editorials, news stories, the wet has glorified the thing that's drunk, eulogized the drinker and created an atmosphere of glamour about the man who dispenses the drink. And to cap it all he has developed so plausible a philosophy of law violation that one is left to conclude not only that liquor is not to be shunned, but that the violation of the liquor laws of the nation is a patriotic obligation.

That procedure would have short shrift if dry

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attention were turned from a consideration of booze past to a more intensive study of booze present. It is not necessary to go back to pre-prohibition days to prove the case against liquor; that case can be proved in New York's speakeasies or by a careful following of the liquor stories that fill our newspapers. Such a study would with little question reveal that liquor in a bootlegger's dive is the same moral liability as liquor in a saloon; that the same characteristics of the liquor business that made crusaders of churchmen a generation ago persist and would make them crusaders today. Liquor will be got rid of and prohibition, thereby, succeed when and only when we make our currently popular cocktail degeneracy as much a thing to be shunned, and our currently canonized race of bootleggers as much to be despised, as the drunks and the booze-venders of a generation ago were shunned and despised.

Such a changed program is particularly important in regard to the practices and the point of view of the younger generation. It is widely asserted that prohibition is debauching our youth who are said to be drinking more than ever. I do not believe that. But I do believe that there is less criticism of the drinking young person and less condemnation of the thing he drinks. This is the case, in the main, because the younger generation has not been taught to identify this commodity as the same thing that, after seventy-five years of experimenting, the

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American people outlawed, or to recognize that the effects of its use are the same today as they have always been. Great numbers of young people simply do not think that drinking is wrong and they have no hesitation—often under the guidance of irresponsible elders—to break the law, simply because they have no knowledge of the characteristics of the commodity with which the law was designed to deal.

And it is exceedingly unlikely that these young people can be reached by the simple process of declaring that the law is a law and they ought, therefore, to observe it. They are too accustomed to breaking the traffic laws for that. It is probable, however, that they could be reached by the slower and more difficult process of being taught to understand the situation that brought the law to pass and the conditions that its violation has created; in other words, by putting the arguments on a basis of social morality. There is considerable evidence to indicate the sensitiveness of the youth of today to social problems. Liquor—not the liquor of 1890, but that of 1930—needs to be and can with ease be related to those social problems, for it constitutes a question that reaches concretely into every community. Young people can be led to stand for its elimination because, already, they widely stand for the elimination of the social evils that it represents. And the task of bringing them to that stand, since

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it involves a program of moral education, is one for the churches to assume.

In the last analysis the fate of prohibition rests with the moral convictions of the American people. Their convictions, developed by the churches, brought the law to pass. The same convictions can maintain it. The Eighteenth Amendment was given legal effect by the operation of legislative machinery, but it can be given practical effect only through the operation of a social conscience. With the wets, I do not believe that you can make people moral by legislation. But I do believe that, by legislation, you can give them certain aids to morality. Whether or not the aids to morality are used to establish it, depends not upon what is on the statute books of the nation, but what is in the wills of the people. The churches are chiefly responsible for the fact that the people willed to establish the Eighteenth Amendment. By their commitment to that Amendment they are chiefly responsible for the further development of the will to make it succeed.

Chapter Eleven

God and Mammon

WHEN the church, today, concerns itself with the moral issues involved in the getting and the increasing of wealth, it may go outside what is conventionally held to be its proper sphere of interests, but certainly not outside the sphere of interests that concerned Jesus. His desire to establish a society dominated by unselfishness and creative love and his observations of the way in which those qualities were affected by the customary processes of wealth-getting led Him to speak out on this issue more concretely perhaps than on any other. He left no instructions on such specific economic issues as child labor or the eight-hour day. But he did leave specific instructions about the qualities of character and of human relationship of which those specific issues are symptomatic; and He affirmed it, as His specific purpose, to bring, to all men, a fullness of life with which the conditions that those issues represent are irreconcilable.

Jesus was very insistent about the citizenship qualifications of those who sought entrance into His

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fellowship and into the Kingdom that He came to establish. For a time, during His ministry, His followers appeared to multiply. If He had let down the bars on the economic or on any other issue, He, doubtless, could have led a mass movement. But He did not let down the bars and as a result He lost the crowds and, at the end, even one of those whom He had most carefully prepared to pass the necessary citizenship tests deserted Him. Significantly enough it was on an economic issue that that disciple failed.

It was a hard doctrine that Jesus advanced with the declaration that it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. The Palestinian capitalists of His day, compared to those of the present, did business on an insignificant scale, but their stock of greed was large. They were without the benefit of modern industry or modern financing, but not without selfishness and injustice. By all the conventional standards of course they were religious, that is, they observed the rituals of the church and supported its activities. It was thus as easy then, as now, to make a plausible case for keeping religion within bounds and preventing religion's priests from exercising a too close scrutiny over business matters about which, of course, they would be hopelessly uninformed. And such a case, doubtless, had some sound basis. For those who were con-

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cerned for the stability and prosperity of the ecclesiastical organization there was no other position to take. Had the High Priest and his lesser religionists endorsed what Jesus had to say on wealth they almost certainly would have brought the entire ecclesiastical structure tumbling down upon them.

But Jesus, none-the-less, made His declarations on the subject because the matter of first importance to Him was not the opulence or the security of the church, but the establishment, in the hearts of a few men, of a righteous manner of life. It was a fundamental of that life that God and His will should be given first place and this, Jesus saw, would be exceedingly difficult for the wealth-getters. God's will, too often, would have to be qualified for other ends in the life of a man who was money-bent. Jesus' program called for the best of life and for all of life and the process of accumulating riches called for much the same thing. Therefore, Jesus declared, "ye cannot serve God and Mammon." The demand of each is for single-minded devotion; properly to serve both is impossible. A man's heart is certain to follow his treasure; and if that treasure is material then God can have no part in it. Society, as Jesus viewed it, was organized on the assumption that man's life consisted in the abundance of the things that he possessed; an assumption that Jesus answered with one of the most dramatic illustrations of His ministry.

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"The ground of a certain rich man," He said, "brought forth plentifully; and he reasoned within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have not where to bestow my fruits? And he said, this will I do, I will pull down my barns and build greater; and there will I bestow all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul thou hast much goods laid up for many years: take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee; and the things which thou hast prepared whose shall they be? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."¹

But Jesus' warning about riches was not confined to their effect upon the Kingdom qualities of the individual who accumulated them. He was aware that mercy and kindness, and brotherliness would survive, with difficulty, in the individual who gave himself up to acquisition. But He was also aware that the very fact of great wealth, in itself, was likely to constitute situations which were out of harmony with the ideal social order to which He was devoted. Walter Rauschenbush points out that Jesus "encountered riches as a prime divisive force in actual life. It wedges society apart in horizontal strata between which real fellow-feeling is paralyzed. It lifts individuals out of the wholesome dependence on their fellows and equally out of the full sense of

¹ Luke, 12:16-21.

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responsibility to them. That is the charm of riches and their curse." ²

This fact, according to Professor Rauschenbush, explains the conversation between Jesus and the rich young ruler. Here, obviously, was a young man whom riches had not spoiled. He still possessed the qualifications which Jesus was looking for in prospective citizens in His Kingdom. But with those personal qualities, He also possessed great riches and these, Jesus evidently believed, constituted a very real social handicap in the intimate fellowship of His Kingdom. "Suppose", asks Prof. Rauschenbush, "the young man had kept his property and had thus joined the discipleship. How would that have affected the spirit of the group? Would not the others have felt jealously that he was in a class by himself? If Jesus had shown him favor, would not even the Master's motives have been suspected? If he had replenished the common purse from his private wealth, it would have given them all an opulent living; it would have attracted selfish men and would have paralyzed the influence of Jesus on the poor . . . The presence of the rich young man would have been ruinous to the spirit of the discipleship and would have put a debased interpretation on the hope of the kingdom. Jesus did not ask him to hand over his property to the common purse, as the Church in later times did constantly, but

² W. Rauschenbush, *Christianity and the Social Crisis*, p. 75 (Macmillan).

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simply to turn it back to social usefulness and come down to the common level.”³

Wealth, therefore, was a matter of concern to Jesus. It concerned Him because He observed it operating upon the lives of men. He saw the love of righteousness and the practice of unselfishness decline as the desire for possession increased. He observed how wealth, in society, cut men off from their fellows and thus was a hindrance to the earthly establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven. He was aware how the injustices of wealth-getting helped to rob men of the abundant life which that Kingdom was to provide. And for these reasons Jesus declared Himself on this question in no uncertain terms and, because of his concreteness provided His church with an economic gospel that has embarrassed it for twenty centuries.

The embarrassment was already apparent when James wrote his epistle. Even then money was getting in its work. Evidently, the church of James' day had its Sunday morning distinction and its quota of discreet ushers who knew how, properly, to handle a social crisis in the most modern fashion. For He describes, with considerable indignation, how, when a prosperous citizen comes to church he is promptly ushered to a good seat “well down in front”; but when a “poor man in vile clothing” appears he is quickly hustled into the gallery or asked to stand.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 76-77.

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This, according to James, was an exact reversal of the judgment of God upon the relative importance of the two men, but it is the type of reversal that has been too frequently characteristic of organized Christianity, which, contrary to the first concerns of Jesus, has often been chiefly interested in preserving, secure and prosperous, its own ecclesiastical machinery. And it is because of this disregard for the teachings and the practices of Jesus that the church, so widely, lost the support of the humble poor among whom Jesus served and who heard His message with the greatest eagerness. We are threatened, as Dr. Henry Sloane Coffin has pointed out with "a class church", and not of the class which had the first attention of Jesus.

Unquestionably, the opinion is widely held that the church, on economic matters, has deserted Jesus and stood with Mammon; or, at best, has sought to serve both masters. This feeling is particularly apparent among laboring classes both in the United States and elsewhere. "Ordinary working people in Britain," writes George Lansburg, English labor leader, "think very little about the churches or about religion. Not that they can be said to be hostile to either, but simply because for huge masses of our people the churches do not exist". Kagawa, Japan's most prominent Christian, writes from his post in the slums of Kobe: "Labor considers the church too other-worldly. It thinks it has no concern with the

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interests of labor; and that the church has lost her aim in this world and is looking up only into heaven. Labor stops thinking about religion and religion stops thinking about labor."

"How often," writes James H. Maurer, President of the Pennsylvania Federation of Labor, "during the lifetime of a worker does he see the pastor of his church or the pastor of any church visit and mingle among the workers in the factories, mills, workshops and mines, to learn at first hand of the man-vexed problems with which the toilers must contend. . . . Small wonder that many workers have a poor opinion of the church and that so many pews are empty." ⁴

But despite these opinions there are some signs that the churches are awakening to their responsibility in relation to the morality of our economic system. I do not mean that that awakening is by any means complete. We have been too long sleeping for that and the consequences of a full awakening are likely to be too serious. But the same social concern that brought about the drive against liquor and has enlisted the churches against war, is beginning, though much more slowly, to arouse them against economic injustice. A recognition of the fact is just appearing that unsanitary factories, twelve-hour days and seven-day weeks, child labor, under-pay, improper housing conditions are just as serious

⁴ *Labor Speaks for Itself in Religion*, edited by Jerome David (Macmillan).

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handicaps to the development of an abundant Christian life, in the individual, as the presence of saloons or the practices necessary for the prosecution of a war. And just as those who have fought against liquor are assailed as bigots and those who are crusading against war are hailed as unpatriotic, so the churchmen and churches who declare themselves on the moral issues involved in economic relationships are described as "radical" and "red" and "probably in the pay of Moscow."

On the European continent, the labor movement has been and remains largely anti-clerical. There is reason for this. The established churches of Europe have, from time immemorial, sided with the upholders of the established order against the rise both of political and of economic democracy. The churches were too closely related to the established order to do anything else. They were not, as they are in the United States and in large measure in England, independent enough to be critical. When they went into politics it was to defend the safety of their own ecclesiastical structure.

In England, however, this has not been the case. There the non-conformist groups provided the original impetus to the labor movement. The fact that the non-conformists, and most notably the Wesleyans, broke away from the established church gave religion a voice on moral issues that did not need to be modified by considerations of expediency. The

sound of that voice was heard throughout the entire early history of the British Labor movement.

Hon. Arthur Henderson, Foreign Minister in the British Labor Government and himself a Wesleyan lay preacher, has referred to the fact that when he first joined the Trade Union Movement, half a century ago, "the majority of its leaders locally and nationally were actively engaged in religious work as lay-preachers, church deacons, Sunday-School superintendents and teachers, Bible class teachers, Band of Hope workers, etc. In my own early experiences as a lay-preacher in the Wesleyan Methodist connection, I found in all parts of the country that many of the most active religious workers were often also the most influential leaders of the local trade-union branches. Thus it is that an explanation is to be found of the fact that the spirit of the British Trade Union Movement has its roots firmly embedded in the soil of religion . . ." ⁵

The chief founder of the British Labor Party was Keir Hardie, who toward the close of his career declared: "if I were a thirty years' younger man, with the experience I have gained during the past thirty-five years, I would methinks abandon house and home, wife and child, if need be, to go forth among the people to proclaim afresh and anew the full message of the Gospel of Jesus of Nazareth." ⁶

Perhaps, the greatest present-day exponent of

⁵ *Labor Speaks in Religion*, p. 144.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

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Christianity in the field of economic relationships is Toyohiko Kagawa, the Japanese Christian. Kagawa, by birth, is one of Japan's blue bloods, but he lives in a nine-by-six hut in the slums of Kobe and accepts as his associates the twenty-thousand down and outs of that great city. Christians and non-Christians alike have made his nine-by-six hut a place of pilgrimage. His labor unions, Consumers' Cooperatives, his Protective Union for Farmers are all practical expressions of his economic gospel. He has stood side by side with the little group of Japanese Christians who organized the labor movement in Japan and who have been endeavoring since the passage of universal manhood suffrage, to establish a strong Japanese Labor Party. Kagawa, in season and out, is an evangelist. But, looking out on life from the slums, he has recognized the fact that no individual is safely regenerated as long as he is obliged to live in such squalor, and that Japan will not be Christian as long as that squalor is tolerated.

In the United States, the most significant single activity of the churches in relation to economic matters was the Inter-church Report on the Steel Strike of 1919. On the assumption that the conditions prevalent in the iron and steel industry were "not good for the nation" and failing to find any federal agency coping with the situation, an official Commission of Inquiry was appointed by the Inter-church World Movement which went into the field for a

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period of seven months and later submitted its findings to President Wilson and released them for publication.

The report points out that the difficulties encountered in securing evidence were more serious than had been expected. "In certain quarters the commission of clergymen were charged with being "Bolshevists" and "anarchists"; their investigators were rebuffed as "Reds"; one was "arrested". But the investigation was continued since, in the words of the commission itself, "as Christians we can do no other." And the results of this investigation, although they brought down unmitigated attacks upon the churches from certain fearful interests not quite sure where the next investigation might begin, are generally conceded to have begun the creation of a public opinion in the United States which led to the wide-spread, although by no means the complete, abolition of the twelve-hour day in the iron and steel industry.

Since 1920, when the Commission published its report, the activities of the churches relative to the moral problems involved in our economic system have considerably increased. Practically all of the leading denominations of the country have officially approved Social Service Commissions whose purpose it is to keep the churches informed on economic questions as they relate to social and moral welfare. Perhaps the most notable of these Commissions is

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the Social Service Commission of the Methodist Episcopal Church of which Bishop Francis J. McConnell is the President and Professor Harry F. Ward, the Secretary. Similarly, Protestantism is represented on the same questions through the Social Service Commission of the Federal Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic Church through the National Catholic Welfare Council. These organizations have carried on wide-spread investigations and made significant pronouncements in the field of economic relationships. "If", writes Bishop McConnell, "any one doubts the force of such pronouncements he ought to be placed for a season in any position where he can hear what the upholders of established systems say when they read the utterances." [†]

The most notable of these pronouncements, doubtless, is that of the Federal Council of Churches which has also been ratified by the international convention of the Young Men's Christian Association and the national convention of the Young Women's Christian Association. The churches, according to this declaration, stand for:

1. Equal rights and justice for all men in all stations of life.
2. Protection of the family by the single standard of purity, uniform divorce laws, proper regulation of marriage, proper housing.

[†] *Christianity and Social Adventuring*, edited by Jerome Davis, p. 53 (Century Co.).

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3. The fullest possible development of every child, especially by the provision of recreation and education.

4. Abolition of child labor.

5. Such regulation of the conditions of toil for women as shall safeguard the physical and moral health of the community.

6. Abatement and prevention of poverty.

7. Protection of the individual and society from the social, economic and moral waste of the liquor traffic.

8. Conservation of health.

9. Protection of the worker from dangerous machinery, occupational diseases and mortality.

10. The right of all men to the opportunity for self-maintenance, for safeguarding this right against encroachments of every kind; for the protection of workers from the hardships of enforced unemployment.

11. Suitable provision for the old age of workers, and for those incapacitated by injury.

12. The right of employes and employers alike to organize and for adequate means of conciliation and arbitration in industrial disputes.

13. Release from employment one day in seven.

14. Gradual and reasonable reduction of hours of labor to the lowest practicable point, and for that degree of leisure for all which is a condition of the highest human life.

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15. A living wage as a minimum in every industry and for the highest wage that each industry can afford.

16. A new emphasis upon the application of Christian principles to the acquisition and use of property and for the most equitable division of the product of industry that can ultimately be devised.

These are the ideals. Their full acceptance and practice have not, as yet, been made a qualification for membership in the churches of the United States. Even the denominations, in their own industrial enterprises, have frequently failed to indicate that they were in accord with the economic doctrines of this declaration. But the development of a Christian conscience on economic problems is, none-the-less under way. By no means all or even a majority of Christian preachers dare, yet, to speak out when their communities are strike-ridden. But the number of those who do speak out is increasing. Not all the denominations are yet ready to endorse the results of church-sponsored investigations in industrial disturbances, but such endorsement is not so generally withheld as it once was and the policy of investigation and report continues to find approval in many official denominational assemblies. The churches have not gone into politics on economic questions, because, in the main, economic questions are settled elsewhere. But they have gone into a whole area of human relationships which once were held to be out-

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side the domain of church interest. Their presence there is not, as yet, a directive force in mitigating industrial evils, but certainly the awakening conscience of the church indicates that, in the end, the moral questions involved in economics will come under as close religious scrutiny as those of politics. And as long as the churches continue their concern for moral matters and economic well-being continues to bear its present relationship to morals that scrutiny is likely to continue and to grow more significant.

Chapter Twelve

"In League with the Pacifists"

THERE are adequate material reasons, reducible to common-sense terms, for the maintenance of peace: industry, commerce, markets, trade balances, your bank account and mine. These things war would put in jeopardy, disrupt, perhaps destroy. And their destruction, for modern man, would be particularly painful. But in the last analysis it is not the material but the spiritual structure of our civilization that would suffer most in another world conflict. And that structure man can even less afford to spare than the abundance of his possessions.

The Christian's case against war is unmistakably clear. Christians have been slow enough to learn the practice of peace, but the ideal has always had a place with their highest aspirations, just as its establishment has always been a fundamental condition of the better world order which their prophets have envisioned. It is in keeping with that tradition and in recognition of the plain facts about war out of which it arose that the churches, in so far as they

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are committed to a Christian world are committed to peace as one of its chief cornerstones.

This tradition, of course, appears to have scant foundation in the Old Testament. The Old Testament has been a great comfort not only to the apologists for war but for many other pagan institutions, including slavery. Irving Bacheller insists that it is high time the Old Testament is "divested of its odor of sanctity" since a good part of it "reads like a report of the German General Staff." And a good part of it does. For the Old Testament records how God chose one nation as His own and exalted them above all others. And there is nothing pacifistic in the history of its rise to power. One reads, for example, how Moses, recalling some ancient grudge, led a war of extermination against the Amalekites; how Joshua refused to make peace with the Canaanites, preferring instead to destroy them utterly, men, women and cattle; how Ezra and Nehemiah, desirous of maintaining the patriotic unity of the people, opposed inter-marriage and, following the same nationalistic logic, refused to come to friendly terms with the Samaritans.¹ Small wonder, with an abundance of this kind of material that the Old Testament has been so widely used as a text book for the hundred percenters.

But unfortunately for that purpose, these passages do not tell the whole of the Old Testament

¹ William Pierson Merrill, *Christian Internationalism*, pp. 18-19 (Macmillan).

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story. Not even the most extreme literalists accept all of the Old Testament, either its doctrines or its recommended practices, as authoritative today. There are certain elements in the Old Testament which are obviously outgrown and even those who are not ready to admit that fact in so many words act, none-the-less, on that assumption. Modern Biblical students, although in disagreement on many matters, are in virtual accord in the opinion that the Old Testament is not a revelation of final religious truth but a record of a nation's moral growth.

The nationalistic sections of the Old Testament declares Dr. Merrill,² "are valuable still as showing us that out of which we have grown, the crude, early stages of that development of the knowledge and service of God which comes to us purified by the handling of Jesus Christ. They are in the Bible as warning to us, not as examples, not as justification for a similar spirit on our part. He who uses the nationalistic temper of the Old Testament to justify a narrow jingo spirit today shows that he has not grasped the very heart-significance of the Bible as a revelation of God and of religion; for that heart-significance lies in growth, movement, religious development which is ever leaving 'its low-vaulted past'."

It is significant, moreover, that jingoism represents by no means all of the Old Testament revela-

² *Idem*, pp. 22-23.

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tion. Running through the entire record is a thread of internationalism and brotherhood. It was promised Abraham that "in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." When Jewish nationalism was rampant, the book of Ruth appeared, which, by all the laws of the current patriotism, should have been suppressed. For when every effort was being made to prevent inter-marriage in order to maintain the Jews in unsullied isolation, the story of Ruth takes a Moabite woman as its heroine and pictures her as superior, in the qualities of womanliness, to Hebrew women of the day. The same inclusiveness is characteristic of the book of Jonah. Jonah was a product of the nationalistic temper of the times. When Jehovah called on him to go to Nineveh he sought to evade the call. The conviction lurked in his mind that if he went to Nineveh his obligations as a servant of Jehovah might lead him to do certain things which would conflict with his obligations as a patriotic member of the nation. Others, since Jonah's day, have faced the same issue. And it will be recalled with what clarity Jehovah in answer to Jonah's doubt revealed the inclusiveness of His concern for all men.

This conception was very much to the fore in the minds of the eighth century prophets, and these prophets, it will be recalled, stood close to the mind of Jesus. Nationalism was far from dead in their time and war remained the commonly accepted

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method for arranging affairs between nations. But when these prophets looked beyond the current hate and narrowness into the new world order that they believed one day would be established, they made it plain that one inescapable characteristic of that world was peace. The prophets were realists enough to know that war would not be outlawed in their day. But they were idealists enough to know that, one day, it would be outlawed; in fact, that the realization of their own prophetic vision for mankind required its outlawry.

But Jesus went beyond this. He not only dreamed of a Kingdom from which war would be banished, but He advocated a manner of life for His disciples which put them into immediate conflict with the whole war system. The basis for foreign relations in His days was the ancient and not altogether abandoned doctrine of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. Jesus' doctrine was of a different sort: "resist not him that is evil but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." Patriotism was kindled by war-time propaganda that led men to love their neighbors and hate their enemies. Jesus' new order of patriotism called men to love their enemies, and thereby reveal their likeness to God who "maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust." Obviously, the wide-spread practice of any such ideal would have threatened not only the na-

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tionalistic aspirations of the Jews but the authority of Rome itself. Similarly it would cut the foundations from under the war system in any generation, which is one reason, doubtless, why these particular instructions of Jesus are so widely dismissed nowadays as too visionary and idealistic for practical consideration.

But Jesus, none-the-less, did practice what He preached, and paid for the practice in full. The Palestine of His day was "occupied territory". But the fact that Rome's legions infested the country had not destroyed the patriotism of the Jews, but strengthened it. There was a strong party of extremists—the Zealots—who advocated, in season and out, that only a policy of force and violence could ever succeed against the invader. There was good ground to believe that they were right; that the issue was clearly drawn between war and national extinction. In the fact of such a situation there was only one course for the patriotic Jew to take. Whatever his convictions about war in general, a war against Rome would be one of self-defense and, therefore, readily justifiable. Jesus, unquestionably, faced this issue for Himself. "There is little doubt", according to Professor Simkhovitch, "that so great an impression was made by Jesus upon His day that had He wanted to be king and lead His people as the Messiah they expected should have done, He would have been joyously

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proclaimed throughout Judea." Only a short time before, a military uprising against Rome had been led by Judas Maccabæus to fall just short of success. The way was prepared for another such attempt and only a leader was lacking.

But Jesus, undoubtedly aware that He was running counter to the patriotic temper of the time, repudiated any such program. He repudiated it not because He was unconcerned for the fate of the nation to which He belonged, but because He was more concerned for the fate of the Kingdom to which He was committed. He was obliged to decide between the popular plan for saving the nation and God's plan for saving the world. He could not undertake both, not because such a joint enterprise was too big for His leadership, but because the two plans simply could not be merged. The practices necessary for the success of the one were bound to conflict with those required for the other. It was Jesus' purpose to reveal God as a Father, under whose guidance all men could walk as brothers and He refused to violate that purpose even though the fate of His nation was involved.

When, therefore, Jesus pointed out that "all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword," it is altogether likely that He was thinking not only or even chiefly of physical destruction, but of the destruction of the new order of relationships that He preached. Physical safety was not one of His

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major concerns and His gospel brought safety neither to Him nor to His disciples. If physical security had been uppermost in His thought His counsel to Peter on the eve of the crucifixion, doubtless, would have been different. Peter, from a material point of view, had appraised the situation accurately. When he drew his sword it had become fairly evident that the only physical way out was to fight. If Jesus had been interested in that way out, this was His opportunity. If He had followed Peter's lead and had recourse to force, the mob might have surged to His support. The people were ready for just such a signal. But Jesus' appraisal of the situation was not material. He knew that the most important matter at stake was not the security of His body, but the validity of His message. And Peter, to his amazement, must have realized as he sheathed his sword that Jesus intended to prove for all time that His doctrine of love and forgiveness was not to be looked upon as a prophecy for some safely distant society, but acted upon as a practice in the society of the present.

And in this the early Christians followed Jesus' example. They, too, were mindful, even unto death, of the way that He prescribed and walked in. Rome, perhaps, had less place than any nation in history for conscientious objectors. Not detention camps but death awaited those who refused to bear arms. And yet between the years of 50 and 170 A.D., when the

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new faith was winning converts throughout the entire Empire, no Christian soldier is known to have existed and countless Christians faced, like Jesus, with the choice between death or a sword, willingly accepted death. They were under the influence of death or a great moral and spiritual ideal and they had no interests for which they would compromise it. It is small wonder that the early Christian church has been called "the first peace society."

After Constantine, however, other interests, many of which were neither moral nor spiritual, began to command the attention of the church. It grew constantly more concerned for its own material security and, as a result, less ready to take the uncompromising moral attitude on this question which had unfailingly put material security in jeopardy. When, finally, temporal matters became its first consideration the church not only sanctioned the use of Peter's sword, but, on behalf of its own interests undertook to wield it. The necessity for physical, that is ecclesiastical safety and power, made it seem less expedient to love one's enemies and do them good. More acceptable counsel was found in the Old Testament where God's chosen people were told to "drive out the Canaanites" and "utterly destroy them." And the church found its Canaanites, not in those who transgressed God's moral laws, but rather in those who trespassed upon or refused to submit to the church's temporal authority. Ecclesiastics

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pointed out that to make war against a bad sovereign was wrong if, as in the case of King John of England, the sovereign was submissive to the papacy; to war against a good sovereign was right if, like Frederick II, he was not submissive. To die in battle with the Saracen was to win a holy martyrdom, regardless of whether one succeeded in winning back the holy places or protecting the pilgrims. But to accomplish these ends by peaceful processes was to betray the faith.

From the date of those earlier compromises with the aims of Imperial Rome the church has come on down to the present Catholic and Protestant with the sword that Jesus rejected often at its side. From time to time some great prophet has arisen to point a few men, momentarily, to another way. Groups have occasionally appeared—like the Moravians and the Quakers—that dared to choose as Jesus chose. But Christians generally have gone on unmindful of the fact that though their language was pious their relationships were far from Christ-like. And thus, as Lord Bryce pointed out in 1918, “after twenty centuries of civilization and nineteen centuries of Christianity mankind is settling its disputes in the same way that mankind did in the Stone Age.”

And yet today, as never before since those first centuries, the moral issue of war is challenging the churches; for, as Dr. Fosdick declares, the “conviction grows that we cannot reconcile Jesus and

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war. It would be worth while, wouldn't it, to see the Christian church claim as her own the greatest moral issue of our time, to see her lift once more, as in our fathers' days, a clear standard against the paganism of this present world, to see her refuse to hold her conscience at the beck and call of any diplomats who happen to be in the saddle, and, really putting the Kingdom of God above nationalism, call the world to peace. That might thin the membership of the church for a while, as the old persecutions did, but in the end it would achieve a triumph upon which future Christians would look back as one of the loftiest trophies of the Cross, the victory of Christ over war."

Such a victory probably is not imminent, but there are signs that it may be in the making. Our churches, today, however grievous their shortcomings, are increasingly sensitive to the moral teachings of Jesus. The relationships that He proclaimed and the manner of life that He incarnated are no longer so readily evaded as they once were. Just what He proclaimed and how He lived are so well known that it is becoming necessary for the churches to take Him seriously or not at all. The rise of a social gospel, however incomplete its acceptance, provides some evidence that they have begun to take Him seriously. The churches are in politics and for that they are condemned. But it is a fact of very great significance that in the United States they have gone

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into politics not in the interests of their own temporal security, but often at the risk of temporal security and on behalf of moral ideals which they believe to be involved in the social teachings of Jesus. This is particularly true in regard to the churches' stand for peace.

From a material point of view the churches stand to gain even less from the movement for world peace than from that for prohibition; which, in brief, means less than nothing. In fact, from a material standpoint they are likely to lose. More than a few of their "big givers" accept the "My country right or wrong" morality of the militarists, and these can be counted upon to keep a sharp eye upon church pronouncements on such matters as national defense, naval disarmament, compulsory military training in schools, the League, the Court and the Pact to Outlaw War. Radical, that is too literally Christian, declarations on the subject are first made the object of opposition and then, if continued, are made the reason for decreased contributions. Meanwhile, for every indication of activity in the interests of world peace, the churches are roundly attacked in the name of what Lord Bryce would probably call "Stone Age patriotism".

I have before me a little volume entitled "Pastors, Politicians, Pacifists," which confesses to be an "expose" of the "treasonous" peace activities of the churches through the Federal Council of the

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Churches of Christ in America. The chapter headings are indicative of the temper of the book: "Co-operating with the Kaiser;" "Conspiring with the Radicals;" "Threatens the Christian Faith;" "Opposition to the American Legion Measures;" "The Federal Council's Department of State;" "Will the Churches or the Government Act;" "Dr. Cadman Pleads Guilty."

In a recent article in the "United States Naval Institute Proceedings", Captain Dudley W. Knox, United States Navy (Retired), after pointing out how the churches defeated the big navy bill in 1927, declares: "Until the World War came upon us, native American intelligence, together with the indoctrination normally carried on in every country by earnest, unselfish, and honest leaders of opinion, was sufficient to safeguard American interests. But within the last few years such leaders have been made impotent—have been submerged—by organizations and money in the hands of radicals, internationalists and foreigners. For them the churches have become as putty, until the very foundations of our internal government as well as every external American interest are in growing jeopardy."

More recently, however, the drive against the church on the war issue has taken a new turn. We are still told, of course, that the purpose of the church is strictly "spiritual"—meaning by spiritual strictly individualistic—and that preachers have no

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business to mix in matters of moral reform. But, now, to the support of these contentions there comes the whole of our budding nationalism which places less stress upon the argument that the church must keep out of affairs of state and insists, instead, that the church must accept the dictates of and be subservient to the state. It is argued, not only that we should render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, but that we should leave it to Caesar to determine what we should render unto God.

This, in brief, is the doctrine of America's newest religion which, since the war, has won a wide following: the religion of nationalism. Central to this gospel is the text: "My Country, Right or Wrong." If it does not lodge Divinity in the ruler, this belief does insist that Divine sanction be accorded to the actions of the state and that, if a crisis should arise, the voice of the state must be identified with and accepted as the voice of God. The reasoning back of this position is not altogether militaristic. It springs, rather, from the conviction, sometimes expressed by those in high places, that the prosperity and power of America are proof of the virtue of Americans and of the sanctity of their government. Like the ancient Romans, we argue that whom the gods love they make prosperous. Since we have been made so prosperous, it follows that we are God-chosen and that therefore we do the will of God when we accept the will of the state.

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To the support of this religion the churches are expected to devote themselves. Both the program of organized Christianity and the conscience of the individual Christian are expected to conform to its dictates. And this conformity, in some cases, is being won. Thus, in commenting on the desire of Professor Douglas Clyde MacIntosh of Yale University to become a citizen of the United States without pledging himself to bear arms for the country, the "Lutheran" declares: "Professor MacIntosh is within the right of his conscience when he sets limits to the obedience he will render civil powers under which he may choose to live. But the state has also the right to determine the qualifications of membership and participation in government. Determination of fundamental relationships is not vested in an individual's opinions. A citizen may oppose his nation's entrance into a war. He may use every atom of his influence to substitute negotiations for battle. *But the claim of final authority on the ground of private conscience is surrendered by the individual to the state.*"

Such a position, unquestionably, is an echo of the philosophy of Protestant Nationalism which resulted from the early alliances between the Reformation churches and the state and which we have already reviewed. Luther took his stand on exactly the opposite position. When at Worms, he declared, "Here I stand, I can do no other, God help me,

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Amen," he proclaimed, to all men, priests, emperors and popes, that the final authority was the authority of individual conscience. The history of the suppression of that doctrine and the acceptance, in its stead, of the authority of the state over the church and over the consciences of its members, constitutes another chapter in which the church went into politics for its own temporal and ecclesiastical ends rather than on behalf of moral ideals. The churches, generally, have profited by what they learned from that mesalliance. Today such a position, in the word of the Christian Century, "is alien to the ideal of a free church in a free state." More than that, it is alien to the moral purposes which Christians, increasingly, believe the church in society must serve.

Moreover, there is good ground to believe that as long as a government is democratic such doctrine is no more desirable from the point of view of the state than of the church. The state that seeks to establish the authority of "My Country Right or Wrong" over the conscience of its citizens, robs itself of the most active check against injustice and error that is available to a democracy; while, at the same time, it cuts itself off from the influence of the most potent force for human progress that is available to man.

"A man has, above all, to be true to himself," writes Prof. Harold J. Laski,³ "for once the fatal

³ Laski, *Authority in the Modern State*, p. 58.

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step is taken of humbling himself against his inner prompting before the demands of authority, the way of acquiescence is easy . . . The assumption here made is that every individual is above all a moral being and that the greatest contribution he can make to the state is the effort of his moral faculties. That is in reality an assistance to society . . . The only grounds for state success is where the purpose of the state is morally superior to that of its opponent. The only ground upon which the individual can give or be asked his support for the state is from the conviction that what it is aiming at is, in each particular action, good . . . It deserves his allegiance, it should receive it only where it commands his conscience."

And such, in brief, must be the position of the church. The only alternative is to admit, frankly, that the church will confine its moral teachings to those issues which are certain never to be at variance with the policy of the state, or to modify them when they are. It is commonly said, as in the case of the editorial from the "Lutheran", that the church has every right to teach against war, in times of peace, but when war comes the question of right and wrong is closed. But as a matter of fact, the actual question is then only opened. The moral issue involved in war is wholly academic as long as there is peace. The issue does not become real until Christian organizations and the Christian individual are faced with the

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question of what they will do about a particular war. It is to be hoped that the activities of the churches and of the peace-loving millions associated with them will work to prevent another major conflict. But if they are not successful it is difficult to see how a church that taught, in peace-time, that war is unchristian can recede from that position and declare a moratorium upon that particular body of Christian truth that will free men from its practice when war has come. And it is difficult, also, to see how Christian preachers who have declared the unchristianity of war, in times of peace, can avoid accepting the consequences of non-coöperation in time of war. On all other moral questions, the spiritual and educational activities of the churches are devoted to the strengthening and the development of the individual against the day of his temptation; to fit him, that is, for the practice of Christian ideals at those times of stress when some other kind of practice would be less difficult. In fact, it has been customary to judge the effectiveness of Christian teaching, on the part of the church, and Christian conviction in the individual not in terms of friendly acquiescence to the moral principles that are taught in the Sunday School or preached from the pulpit, but, rather, in terms of the hard practice of those moral principles out in society. That it is the state, rather than some other agency, that makes that practice difficult hardly alters the nature of the principles or relieves

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the Christian from the responsibility of practicing them. Unless, that is, the church or the individual is convinced that the moral judgments of politics are more valid and more binding than those of religion. Such a position has been accepted before now. But to accept it leaves Caesar supreme in the place that was claimed for Christ.

Speaking of the World War, Dr. Charles E. Jefferson declares, "We slid into Gehenna because the leaders of the Christian church abdicated their position as teachers of national morality and allowed the devotees of Caesar to usurp their place. The cohorts of Caesar stoutly insisted on their divine right to mould national policy and to spend national treasure, and the leaders of the church meekly gave way, allowing the nations to be led by men who did not have the mind of Christ . . . With their lips they paid formal homage to Christ, but in their hearts they said 'we will not have this man to rule over us'. The Prince of Peace was recognized in hymn books but not in diplomacy. The ideas of Jesus were taught to Sunday School children but not practiced by statesmen. The ideals of Christ were displayed on the walls of the church, but not on the walls of the capitol. Governments were Christian in word but not in deed. The blind led the blind and they all went over the precipice together."

The religion of nationalism would perpetuate that blind acceptance of a blind leadership. It would not

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take the church out of politics; but would keep it in, as it was kept in in Czarist Russia, to serve as the state's Department of Morale. It would employ it to provide religious sanction for whatever enterprises the state might choose to engage in; to be the "Yes, Yes, Man" for the government. It would subject the teachings of Jesus to the erasures and elisions of Caesar's censors. It would train up preachers who would "stick to the good old gospel". But what a gospel! Nationalized, fearful, moral only with the approval of the vested authorities, transforming only when and where transformation is politically desirable, committed to an earthly Kingdom of Heaven only in so far as such a scheme fit in with the ambitions of the state!

It is not likely that the churches in regard to war or any other moral issue will be frightened into the acceptance of such a denatured faith. The tendency of the times seems to indicate that if, by opposing war, the Christian offends the national god, then the offense will have to bring what consequence it will. If to stand for peace means to violate the doctrines of state worship, then the churches seem to be increasingly prepared to perpetuate that violation, confident that no charge against them could constitute such a terrible indictment as that they failed to take that stand.

If anything were lacking to make clear the moral case against war it was amply provided by the events

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of the World War in which Christians, praying to the Christian's God, went out to destroy each other. In the face of this, the most colossal repudiation of Christ's way of life that history records, the churches stood absolutely helpless. All their accumulated resources, and the influence of two thousand years of their professed following of the Prince of Peace, were unable to delay the start of that conflict for a single day; nor cut short its duration for a single hour; nor eliminate its brutalities.

"No one", writes Dr. Jefferson, "can say that the slaughter would have been lengthened if there had been no Christian Church or that the ghastly and unspeakable horrors of the war would have been greater if Jesus had never died on the Cross. There is a handwriting on the wall which everyone with eyes can read. The Christian church has been weighed in the balance and found wanting."⁴

With the conclusion of the war, therefore, the churches not only realized that this was the world's most serious moral issue, but that more than the issue itself was involved in its settlement. Rather, the validity of Christianity's whole conception of man's relations to his fellows and to God; in brief, the whole of Christianity was at stake. Christians, with the memory of the bloody holocaust fresh in their minds, began to see that the church, in the end, would be obliged to give up war or to give up Jesus.

⁴ Jefferson, *Christianizing a Nation*, p. 166 (Doubleday-Doran).

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Christianity might survive another war. It might survive several. But in the end the world would not be able to maintain both institutions. One would be destroyed by the other and which turned out to be destroyer and which destroyed remained to be seen.

Indications are now wide-spread and increasing that the churches recognize the issue to be as serious as this. As I write, the London Disarmament Conference is in session. It is interesting to recall that, at the outset of the Conference when the world's hopes were high that it would mark a significant step toward peace, Colonel Henry L. Stimson, American Secretary of State and head of the American delegation declared: "If it had not been for the peace activities of the American churches this conference would never have convened." At the present moment the conference appears to be on the verge of collapse. Appeals to save it from failure are being cabled daily to the American delegation and reported in the press. It is significant that these cables, with very few exceptions, are from church organizations and church leaders. It seems not only clear that the churches are uniting on this issue, but that, without the activities of the churches the question would hardly be an issue at all.

And these church moves to save the London Conference are by no means hastily considered actions. They find their authority in the official pronouncements of practically all the denominations of the

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United States on the question of world peace. Churches, like the Dutch Reformed, that never before declared themselves on a political matter have recently spoken out on this issue. To read these statements is to realize that much the same uncompromising moral enthusiasm is entering into this crusade for peace that characterized the drive against the liquor traffic.

"War", declare the Methodists, "is the supreme enemy of mankind." And they go on to dedicate themselves to a campaign of anti-war education; to ask the President to call a new disarmament conference; to urge immediate membership in the World Court and more active participation in the League of Nations. The Congregationalists make a similar declaration ending with the assertion that "the Church of Christ, as an institution, should not be used as an instrument or an agency in the support of war." More emphatically, even, the synod of the Evangelical Church declares: "we will not, as a Christian Church, ever again bless or sanction war. We make this declaration of abstention as a Christian communion and do not intend it to bind individuals unless and until they accept it personally. We do mean it to commit our church to the fundamental proposition that to support war is to deny the Gospel we profess to believe."

Similarly, the Presbyterians have stated their conviction that, since the function of the church is

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spiritual, it should never again bless a war or be used as an instrument in the promotion of war. Practically all of the denominations have given official endorsement of the Pact of Paris. Twenty-six denominations, as I have already pointed out, have established official peace commissions, aimed to carry forward the peace movement within the churches; and through the Federal Council of Churches, the twenty-eight bodies officially related to it have gone repeatedly on record in favor of peace measures and in opposition to proposals which seemed likely to make the establishment of peace more difficult.

Moreover, the churches increasingly recognize the fact that the destruction, that is, the complete and final uprooting of the whole war system seems to be the only course of procedure that is possible if the issue is faced at all. There is no safe middle-of-the-road in the matter. If the conclusion is now finally reached that war as a method by which men solve their difficulties with each other is unchristian, then the very nature of war, itself, requires its destruction. Liquor became a moral issue, not because in the beginning it was held to be morally wrong to drink, but because so many moderate drinkers became intemperate. In regard to war, however, such distinctions are impossible. One war, for those who are engaged in it, is as intemperate as another, and the aim of the peace movement is

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not to teach the world to make war in moderation but to have done with it entirely. There is some debate, at present, as to the exact point at which a beverage becomes intoxicating. It is argued, for example, that wines and beer could, with perfect safety to the principle of prohibition, be allowed an alcoholic content of considerably more than the present one-half of one per cent. There is no such level of safety, however, in regard to war. If the method of war is wrong at all, it is all wrong. There is no moral genius capable of defining the point at which the process of war ceases to be good and becomes evil, because there is no such point. If war is evil it becomes so when men start fighting and continues until they stop. That is due to the nature of fighting.

I am aware, of course, that valiant and significant efforts have been made in modern times to bring war under some satisfactory system of regulation. Nations, which have by no means determined to abandon the war methods, have, none-the-less, pledged themselves that when they do go to war they will observe certain amenities; that they will refrain from unnecessary ruthlessness, particularly toward non-combatants; that they act with kindness, at least with forbearance, just as far as military expediency will allow. Plans are afoot to "humanize" the submarine meaning, I suppose, to prevent its use against merchant vessels; to limit the

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use of poisonous gases; to restrict the bombing activities of aircraft.

But these efforts, commendable though they are, are not being made with the thought in mind that war, like liquor, will be tolerable if we can get it under an eight hour law, with Sunday closing. No one, not even the extreme militarist, so far misrepresents war as that. These, on the contrary, are simply stop-gap measures designed with a realistic eye to the fact that if nations cannot be made to abandon war entirely they at least may be persuaded to keep its use, and therefore its evils, within some bounds. Unquestionably, everything possible should be done to "humanize" war. But when the best has been done its evil will not be eliminated, but only somewhat segregated. What happens inside the official fighting zone of the most humanized of conflicts will still look very much like what has always happened there and be subject to much the same appraisal.

Furthermore, a Christian appraisal of the war method will hardly be affected by the fact that nations may go to war in self-defense. Once a war is on the methods employed in its prosecution vary but little, whatever the causes may have been that precipitated it. The fact that there are good reasons for a war does not mitigate the evils of the business of waging it.

And looked at from only one side of the fighting

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line all wars, in these days, are defensive. It is, perhaps, some tribute to the progress of enlightenment that peoples in this modern world cannot be persuaded to go out to fight unless the fighting is labelled "defensive." On the Allied side of the lines in France, every fighting man believed he was fighting a war of self-defense and on the German side of the lines every fighting man believed the same thing. And the first business of the war propagandists is to prepare a "defense" story that will hold water and to see that everybody accepts it. If the churches, therefore, declared that a war was unchristian only when it was aggressive, they would probably be obliged to continue to bless wars as long as wars continued.

Just what, precisely, the churches would do if another war came on no one can say with certainty. A good many of them doubtless would do as they have always done; give the conflict their blessing. That issue, in the event of a conflict, would probably rest largely with the individual preacher. Patriotic pressure, exerted through just the proper members of his congregation, might prove irresistible. But there is, I believe, a large company of ministers, whose number increases daily, who would refuse to compromise and unhesitatingly take the consequences. Whatever other features the next war may boast, it will probably produce a greater body of conscientious objectors than any previous war in

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history. And among those who actually are engaged there will be fewer who will carry with them any illusions about the discovery of a Christian apologetic for the thing they do.

Meanwhile, the task that the churches have assumed is not the determination of what their course would be if another war should come, but the discovery of what they can do to prevent its coming. If this is not within the province of the church, then the church's allegiance to Jesus Christ has no practical meaning. The churches may profess God as Father and all other men as brothers. But when they sanction war they deny their profession by their practice. The time is at hand in regard to this issue when the profession will have to be denied or the practice abandoned.

Conclusion

THE Christian church, as the preceding chapters of this book have indicated, has been in politics from the first centuries of the Christian era down to the present. Its political aims have not always been dominated by moral considerations and its political practices have not always reflected a Christian standard of moral ideals. The Mediaeval Catholic Church, and at the beginning the established churches of Protestantism, had a stake in politics which, in the main, was very much like that of other political agencies. They either sought, as in the case of the Catholic Church, to set up an ecclesiastical super-state; or, as in the case of the established Protestant churches, to lend their unquestioning support to the secular state in exchange for the state's backing of their particular ecclesiastical systems. In either case, the church, when it has gone into politics for other than moral purposes, has been obliged to make moral sacrifices in the interests of political expediency, and to surrender, in considerable measure, its moral leadership in the field of human relations. It has then, in the words of Lord Bryce "departed from its own best self,"

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just as from the point of view of the gospels it has departed from the considerations which were first in the mind of Jesus. On the other hand, the early Christian Church was a political factor of the first importance in the Roman Empire because of the single-mindedness of its devotion to certain moral principles. It was zealously determined to follow and to establish Jesus' way of life, and it had only moral interests at stake in its contact with the state. History indicates that when the church has followed such a course it has been irresistible, because, like Jesus, the social interests that brought it into contact with the political establishment have been directed to the establishment of moral ideals without regard for the temporal consequences.

To keep the church from using politics for temporal ends is a legitimate democratic precaution which is in harmony with the modern churchman's conception of the function of the church. To seek, however, to keep the church from using politics for moral ends is neither legitimate nor democratic; neither justifiable on the basis of the doctrine of the separation of church and state, nor reconcilable with the society-transforming purposes to which the Christian gospel commits it. From the eighth century Prophets down through the ministry of Jesus, the Christian tradition has involved the conviction that God's redemptive plan required the regeneration of the individual and of society; and that re-

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generation was not compartmental, but was designed to operate in every area of life where men do evil and might be taught to do good.

It has been emphasized as a hopeful sign of the times that the churches, in recent years, have begun to look to these prophetic sources not only to provide the source of what man should believe about God, but also to be the guide to the way he should act toward his fellow-men. The conviction is growing, as we have seen, that the only safe way to judge the reality of what a man says he believes about God is to find out the relationship he maintains toward his human associates. Such a conviction has long been accepted as far as man's personal relationships, that is his personal morality, were concerned. It was expected that a church member would not kill or steal or otherwise transgress the moral code of the decalogue. But the enforcement of these restraints was largely individualistic. Although man, in his individual capacity could not kill, man in patriotic league with his fellows might. Man, the individual could not steal, but Man, Incorporated, might.

These distinctions, more recently, have begun to disappear. I do not mean that their entire disappearance is a matter of the immediate future. We have cherished our group sins too long to surrender them easily. But they are, none-the-less, under attack. They are under attack because thoughtful

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Christians, sincerely anxious for the establishment of a Christian world and deeply conscious of the glaring particulars in which our world is not Christian, have begun to act on the assumption that by Jesus' standards sin is sin, whether its source is a man or a group of men; that the results in both cases are the same; and, finally, that a society that is bad can only work to prevent the development of men who are good; in fact, that it is exceedingly difficult and somewhat exceptional for the individual characters of men to rise very much above the level of the social order that environs them.

These convictions account, in large measure, for the developing interest of the church in social questions. They account, too, for the presence of the church of today in politics. However ill-advised its political activities may sometimes be, and whatever the political short-comings to which it may be heir, the fact remains that the church is in politics in the United States for no selfish ecclesiastical or temporal ends. Its stake in politics is, and in the United States always has been, moral. No ecclesiastic or group of ecclesiastics has ever spoken for the church on any other issue. And as long as church government in the United States rests as widely as it now does upon the consent of the governed, they never will.

There is still a considerable gulf between the uncompromising single-mindedness of the early Chris-

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tian church and the position of modern Christianity. But the rise of the social gospel and the increasing courageousness of the present-day church in the face of social evils are indications that that gulf is narrowing. Certainly it is from the practices of Jesus Himself, and from those of the early Christians, rather than from the temporal concerns of Mediaeval Christianity, that the modern Christian finds precedent for the political activities of his church. There is no evidence whatsoever that the church is in politics in the United States for the purpose of establishing an ecclesiastical super-state to which the political order will be subservient. The evidence indicates, rather, that it is in politics in order that the political order through the operation of the processes of democracy may be brought more fully to reflect and more perfectly to guarantee the ideals of Christian morality and relationship.

This task, of course, is educational. It involves that individual men shall be taught to desire that kind of a political order. But it is also political and social. It involves that men who have learned this desire in the church, and are joined through the church with others who share the same conviction, shall be helped by the church to determine to bring that political order to pass. Despite its innumerable divisions on many matters, the church, more than any other social institution, draws men of like moral purpose into a single fellowship. If that fellowship

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more than any other unites them on the same moral platform it is inevitable, simply by virtue of the necessity for concerted action, that they should seek, through the church, to express their common desires for the social and political establishment of their common moral convictions. Moreover, if the church is qualified to develop the moral ideals of the individual, it is likewise qualified and obliged to serve as the channel through which groups of such individuals can unite to declare their social and political opinions on moral matters.

In fact, it is not likely that the state would profit if the churches should surrender their right to bring its actions under moral scrutiny or cease their efforts to shape its policies and institutions according to Christian ideals. Nor is it likely that the churches would profit if they ceased their active concern for the development of a more Christian social and political order, and abandoned their belief that society, as well as man, stands in need of redemption.

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